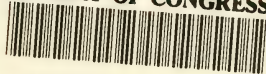


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L I F E  
OF  
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.



LIFE  
OF  
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,

*DISCOVERER OF THE NEW WORLD.*

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

REV. A. G. KNIGHT,  
*Of the Society of Jesus.*

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# CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

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## CHAPTER I.

As long as Englishmen are sailors and merchants, and love enterprise and admire greatness of courage, they ought to hold in veneration the memory of Christopher Columbus. If anything could shake his popularity in England, it is to be feared that it might be the discovery that he was not only a daring seaman, who, despising all timid counsels and dark forebodings, gallantly sailed his little craft into a world of unknown waters, but moreover all the time a saint of Holy Church; and that when he departed this life he was ripe for canonization, and that he even miraculously aids those who commend themselves to his powerful intercession. This is at least a new idea for Englishmen, who have derived in nearly every case all their information about the character and work of the great admiral from the beautiful Life written by Washington Irving. The Protestant mind is impatient of the supernatural. Direct intervention of Heaven is conceivable in the case of

the ancient Jews, because they lived so long ago, but a fixed providential mission, more especially in the shape of actual voyages preordained and even prophesied, is surely not quite what men need be prepared to admit for the days of a Tudor prince. Our countrymen are honorably distinguished among the nations of modern Europe by their sense of religion. They are not ashamed to worship God. In London, Sunday is (often inconveniently so) a day of rest; in Paris for many years past, and lately in Rome under the puerile Italian Government, it has ceased to be so. But as in human things, so in divine, an Englishman is not demonstrative. His affections are deep rather than gushing. (An English boy loves his sisters, but will not submit to be hugged and kissed before his schoolfellows.) Affection and piety are for private use.\* Respectable tradition requires that good Christians should put in a weekly appearance at church, but gorgeous ceremonial and vows and visions are out of date. Accordingly the proposal to canonize a man like Columbus, whose name has its established place in secular history, is an insult, they think, to common sense, and can only be regarded as one more indication of that aggressive spirit of the Roman Church which fills Mr. Gladstone's mind in the evening of life with generous alarm.

A petition for the introduction of the cause has been numerously signed by Fathers of the

Vatican Council, wherein it is declared that the services of Christopher Columbus of Genoa in the propagation of the faith are unparalleled; that his earthly recompense was calumny, insult, and personal ill-treatment; that the Holy See from the first befriended him; and that Pius IX. is the only Pope who has set foot in America. It is added that Count Roselly de Lorgues has vindicated the memory of Christopher Columbus, and has manifested his supernal vocation and high virtues, especially his Catholic zeal, and that an ardent desire is felt that the public honors of the Church should be decreed by the Holy See to the Christian hero. Cardinal Donnet is mentioned as having already sued for the introduction of the cause *exceptionali ordine*. It is stated that Europe, Asia, Africa, and America share the movement, that the lapse of time has interposed some technical difficulties, but that these ought to be overriden in a case which has no precedent.

An extract from a translation which appeared in the *Tablet* (August 19, 1876), of a letter addressed to the Holy Father by Cardinal Donnet, Archbishop of Bordeaux, writing, as he in the course of the letter says, in his character of "Metropolitan of part of the Antilles and member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites," will perhaps best explain the drift of the document and the state of the question. He says:

"Urged on by a secret inspiration from on high,

and encouraged by the gracious sympathy of your Holiness, he (one of the most illustrious writers of France, the Count Roselly de Lorgues) gave us a new history of Christopher Columbus, in which he refuted all the calumnies heaped up by previous historians, and proved to demonstration that the discovery of the New World was pre-eminently the work of God, and held up to our admiration Christopher Columbus as a providential man, a messenger of Heaven prepared by especial graces for the accomplishment of his especial mission.

“Thus both Europe and America have been moved by these revelations of history, which invest the celebrated navigator with a supernatural splendor. The facts and documents on which the impartial historian has based his account are so numerous and so conclusive that they have carried conviction to the mind even of writers separated indeed from Catholic unity, but guided by the love of truth alone. This conviction, Holy Father, has become in a short time so strong, that a large number of the Fathers of the Vatican Council have voluntarily affixed their signatures to the petition for the introduction of the cause. The solemn expression of their desires would have been presented to the Council itself had not the grave events which have agitated Europe supervened to cause the suspension of the labors of that august assembly.”



If the whole affair is strange and distasteful to Protestant Englishmen, it is downright aggravating to French infidels. "On se prepare," says *l'Opinion Nationale*, "dans la ville de Rome, à procéder à une nouvelle beatification ; et l'homme qu'il agit de canoniser est—Christophe Colomb ! Nous protestons, de toutes nos forces, contre cet empiètement de la cour de Rome. N'y a-t-il pas dans le monde assez de Benoit Labre et de Marie Alacoque, assez de visionnaires et d'extatiques, assez de martyrs de la Chine et du Japon, pour satisfaire aux besoins dévots des ultramontains ?"

The protestation is quite thrown away. The disapproval of the "infidel press" is to Catholics a guarantee of the goodness of a cause second only to an autograph letter of the Holy Father. The Count Roselly de Lorgues is favored in both these ways.

Is it, then, likely that Columbus will ever be St. Christopher, second of that name ? If it be not prediction and accomplishment, it is a coincidence worth noticing that the legend of the original St. Christopher symbolizes so beautifully the achievement of his namesake. Columbus, saint or not, was a giant, and he carried Christ across the water. There are, it must be admitted on all hands, abundant materials in the life of Columbus of the kind with which we are familiar in the lives of the saints—very much earnestness of purpose, deep religious convictions, superhuman labors,

incredible sufferings, lofty enthusiasm, grand achievements, and disgrace and dereliction. St. Francis Xavier left to die alone under the trees on a little deserted island; Columbus passing away absolutely unnoticed amid the rejoicings of a royal marriage—the history of the Church is full of such examples, from the days of John the Baptist, who was put to death to please a dancing-girl. The greatest reward in God's gift is martyrdom, and the next greatest is to meet with ingratitude.

Protestant historians like Washington Irving may well be excused if they fail to discern in the undertaking of Columbus the marks of a divine commission, when his Catholic contemporaries seemed so little conscious of any such hypothesis. No doubt there were good reasons for their reticence. It was natural for them to shrink from publishing their shame, and it was more pleasant to suppress, if possible in silence, the unworthy treatment of a noble soul, which rouses indignation even now after four centuries. It is fair to consider also that contemporaries cannot see in one comprehensive glance, as their descendants can, the harmonious connection of the various incidents that go to form a great career. Writers of saints' lives understand that their main business is to dive beneath the surface and trace if possible the subtle action of divine grace; but essayists and historians are usually content to

deal with facts and the visible course of affairs, and the working of political motives and the external manifestations of natural character, and seldom venture into the inner world of souls, or care to estimate the bearing of temporal action upon eternal destinies, and the true value before God and his angels of the words and deeds under consideration. If Washington Irving had been a Catholic, he might still have failed to detect the signs of sanctity in a career which certainly owed much of its splendid success to the power of human genius and indomitable will. Lofty enthusiasm may be natural impulse, not the inspiration of heaven; deep religious conviction may be the result of early education; great sufferings and startling reverses are found even among the unregenerate. To Catholics a few proofs of genuine humility in the hour of glory, of meekness under persecution, of tender devotion to our Blessed Lady, of sensitive regard for purity, would go further to make known a messenger of God and a child of grace than any number of great results or assemblage of brilliant qualities.

Before the question of the "canonization" of Columbus can be fairly discussed, it is necessary to know the true nature of that sanctity to which the Church awards a place on her scroll of spiritual fame. It is by no means synonymous with mere moral goodness or uprightness of intention.

Sanctity certainly includes integrity, but it does not consist therein. The fact is that the word "sanctity" is of very vague import to many minds, and is used even by Catholics in various gradations of meaning. It is a relative term depending for its special force upon the standard of comparison adopted. In popular esteem many a quiet and amiable father of a family passes for almost a saint when he is compared with garroters and drunken wife-beaters, and perhaps the same man is, in the eyes of God who made him, a far greater offender than the poor felon condemned by human justice. He does no violence to life and limb, but he sits by his fireside calmly writing "infidel" articles, which turn men's hearts from the knowledge and the love of their Creator, and will continue to murder, not bodies, but more precious souls, long after the poor wretch who wrote them has stood before the judgment-seat and been condemned for the sin of unbelief. In popular esteem a man who speaks much about duty and the Bible, and praises virtue and sets the example of much prayer, may pass for a saint, and yet Christ may condemn him for the sin of wilful heresy. God's valuation of sanctity is not formed upon popular opinion. When Catholics speak of "a saint," they may mean a man who never commits a mortal sin, who keeps his soul in the state of grace, and who is therefore "holy" in a very true sense of

the word, being in the favor of God, possessing spiritual life, enjoying the companionship of good angels here on earth, and the promise, contingent only on his perseverance, of being eternally happy with them in heaven. Catholics, again, when they speak of a saint may mean a man who not only keeps his soul free from mortal sin, but who tries to banish even venial sin, and to make himself purer in the sight of God from day to day, who in Catholic terminology is "aiming at perfection." This is the state of soul of those who without any manifestation of unusual gifts are following out their "religious" vocation in the faithful observance of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. It is a condition of spiritual life, incomparably higher than the previous degree of mere freedom from mortal sin, and deserves in a fuller sense the name of sanctity. But far above this again is the sanctity of which the Church speaks when there is question of canonization. Sanctity in this strict and technical sense means Christian virtue practised in heroic degree; and before the Church commits herself to the assertion of this practice of heroic virtue, she for greater security, by a self-imposed disciplinary enactment, awaits the sanction of Heaven in the form of miracles wrought after death at the instance of the holy man whose life may be under examination at the time.\*

\* Miracles wrought before the man's death do not necessarily

Sanctity, then, is Christian virtue practised in heroic degree. Progress in virtue is, as Catholic asceticism understands it, the gradual absorption of self in God. Self-love of the wrong—that is, of the earthly—type must cease to be the hidden spring of thought and action, and the love of God must come to be no longer the predominant but the paramount and only ruling principle of life, of its entire tenor and its minute details. The Apostle expresses the full idea of Christian perfection when he says, “I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.” Thomas à Kempis explains the process of working out the same perfection when he says, “Fili, quantum a te vales exire, tantum in me poteris transire.” \* When a man gives his life for God, he passes at once to the limit of self-renunciation, for all earthly interests and possessions have life for the substratum, according to that of the philosopher: “Prius est esse quam esse tale.” Therefore, true martyrdom—*i.e.*, voluntary death in the cause of God—is consummate sanctity, and to pray for a martyr’s soul is to insult his memory. The case with other saints is less clear and their merit less sharply defined, but in principle the gift of sanctity is for all the same—the exorcism of self, not a casual or intermittent forgetfulness of lower motives, but a

establish his sanctity, for after working the miracles he was still liable to fall from grace, not being impeccable.

\* AKempis, bk. iii. c. lvi.

constant and habitual, a conscious and deliberate, rejection of every aspiration that does not tend to the glory of God either directly or ultimately.

The Church unquestionably is austere in her "canon" of sanctity. She makes really formidable demands and is hard to please, but her demands are self-consistent and her severity is not unreasonable. She believes in a middle state of souls suffering for a time, and teaches that God does not banish from his face for ever those imperfect souls which are not worthy to be straight admitted to the Beatific Vision. How pure should be the souls that can be received at once or very speedily into that happy place "where nothing defiled can enter!" Those whom the Church canonizes are precisely such souls—those whom the all-holy God, whose eyes are purer than to behold iniquity, is willing to receive to his embrace.

Tried by so high a standard, will the life of a Lord High Admiral, holding command over rough sailors and mutinous subjects, reach the required immaculateness? Mild words and gentle treatment would scarcely avail to keep in order the fierce spirits of the Spanish main. It is at all events a fact that he was never known to swear, and it is certain that many saints, even *qua tales*, have contrived, like St. Bernard and St. Antony of Padua, to awe into tame submission to their will the fiercest tyrants with their robber-



bands behind them. St. Gregory the Seventh (Hildebrand) could use imperious tones and deal hard blows, and his worst enemies did not accuse him of weakness. St. John in the Apocalypse puts cowards out of heaven, and Rome does not canonize feebleness or inertia.

Columbus certainly bears on all hands a high character. About his general honesty of purpose and deep sense of religion there has never been a doubt since the petty jealousies of personal ill-will were hushed in death. Prescott says: "Whatever were the defects of his mental constitution, the finger of the historian will find it difficult to point to a single blemish in his moral character. His correspondence breathes the sentiment of devoted loyalty to his sovereigns. His conduct habitually displayed the utmost solicitude for the interests of his followers. He expended almost his last *maravedi* in restoring his unfortunate crew to their native land. His dealings were regulated by the nicest principles of honor and justice. His last communication to the sovereigns from the Indies remonstrates against the use of violent measures in order to extract gold from the natives as a thing equally scandalous and impolitic. The grand object to which he dedicated himself seemed to expand his whole soul, and raised it above the petty shifts and artifices by which great ends are sometimes sought to be compassed. There are some

men in whom rare virtues have been closely allied, if not to positive vice, to degrading weakness. Columbus's character presented no such humiliating incongruity. Whether we contemplate it in its public or private relations, in all its features it wears the same noble aspect. It was in perfect harmony with the grandeur of his plans and their results, more stupendous than those which Heaven has permitted any other mortal to achieve." \*

Washington Irving, though he considers the ever-present and pervading sense of a divine appointment as the coloring of a poetical temperament, and though upon careful reflection he cannot altogether excuse his participation in the bigotry of the age, yet pays a magnificent tribute to his earnestness of piety in an eloquent passage which is in everybody's hands.† It is sad to think that, with all this genuine admiration for his hero, he has notwithstanding been but too surely one of those mischievous friends from whom it is reasonable to pray to be delivered. He has unwittingly lent his powerful aid to defame, in a matter of grave moment, the man whom he undoubtedly meant to honor.

Columbus has been greatly slandered. In his lifetime designing men, envious of his well-earned glory, or eager to cheat him out of the

\* "Ferdinand and Isabella," pt. ii. c. ix.

† "Life of Columbus," bk. xviii. c. v.

fruits of his labor, made systematic efforts to ruin him at the court of Spain, bringing charge after charge against him, accusing him of cruelty and vanity and unscrupulous ambition, and every vice but one, conspicuous by its absence. It was reserved for unwary biographers and well-meaning panegyrists to supply long after the missing link in the chain of iniquity, and to fill up that conspicuous omission. No Catholic ever read the life of Nelson without grieving that so great a man should have shown so little power to control the erring impulses of his own heart. To Catholics, a few words, mentioning as an ascertained fact that Columbus formed an unhappy attachment at Cordova, which helped to beguile the tedium of his hope deferred, and to reconcile him to a lengthened stay in Spain, would more surely ruin all repute of sanctity than any high-flown terms of praise could help the claim. Heroic virtue cannot co-exist with the violation of the moral law, and it is needful to pause at the outset of the main enquiry to sift the proofs of a charge which Irving and Prescott pass by as a trifle, and which perhaps scarcely injures a great reputation before "the world," \* but which is destructive to those higher pretensions now for the first time submitted to the notice of the Church. There are in the kingdom of heaven illustrious penitents, but the promoters of "the cause" of

\* I pray not for "the world" (St. John xvii. 9).

Christopher Columbus are not so faint-hearted as to content themselves with affirming that in the end, after the chastening hand of tribulation had lain heavy on him, he turned with a full heart to God, and died a saint; but they profess to believe that his career on earth was a sublime vocation, nobly responded to, and that he was the predestined herald of the faith to half the world.

Truth of history, and moreover the justice which even dead men can claim, demand that some effort should be made to unsay a falsehood which has been in all good faith accepted as a truth by the fair-minded and generous Washington Irving, and which, having received the sanction of his authority and the consecration of his style, has not only passed unquestioned in England and America, and wherever the English language is used, but has been translated into all the languages of Europe, and has been adopted (with improvements) by Alexander von Humboldt in his work upon the "History of the Geography of the New World," from which as from a new centre of activity it has no doubt radiated into regions inaccessible to ordinary minds. Washington Irving says:

"During his first visit to Cordova he had conceived a passion for a lady of that city, named Beatrix Enriquez. This attachment has been given as an additional cause of his lingering so long in Spain and bearing with the delays he ex-

perienced. Like most of the particulars of this part of his life, his connection with this lady is wrapped in obscurity. It does not appear to have been sanctioned by marriage. The lady is said to have been of noble origin. She was the mother of his second son, Fernando, who became his historian, and whom he always treated on terms of perfect equality with his legitimate son, Diego" (bk. ii. ch. vi.)

In the separate biographical sketch of Fernando Columbus he says more boldly :

"Fernando Columbus (or Colon, as he is called in Spain), the natural son and the historian of the admiral, was born in Cordova" (bk. iv. n. 3).

A few lines further on we read : "His mother, Doña Beatrix Enriquez, was of a respectable family, but was never married to the admiral, as has been stated by some of his biographers."

Count Roselly de Lorgues, quite apart from all question of the sanctity of his hero, has done good service in unravelling the proofs and tracing the pedigree of this injurious assertion, which to a Catholic reader casts a blight over the noblest years of a noble life. Would it be believed? The only ultimate foundation of this modern theory is the omission, probably accidental, certainly not very important, of *one word*, which it might indeed have been a satisfaction to find present, but from the omission of which absolutely nothing can be lawfully concluded. An inference

was drawn one hundred and sixty-six years after the death of Columbus by a librarian, chiefly skilled, M. de Lorgues thinks, in arranging and ticketing books, from a copy of the will of Columbus which by ill-luck came into his keeping. He found it therein stated that a pension had been settled by Columbus upon Beatrix Enriquez, "mother of his second son, Fernando." The word *wife* was absent, and so, being a man of precise mind, he jumped to the conclusion that the omission was significant, and without thinking for a moment that he was originating a great injustice, he quietly and artlessly wrote down Don Fernando an illegitimate son. This is all the known foundation! For another one hundred and twenty years poor Nicolas Antonio's words slept peacefully in the dust of the library shelves till they were exhumed by a lawyer, the licentiate Luiz de la Palma y Freytas, who found them very much to his purpose on occasion of some lawsuit, and tried to base an argument upon them, but they were put out of court. In 1805 a Piedmontese Academician, Galeani Napione, discovered the lucubrations of the aforesaid lawyer, and gained credit as a critic by publishing and endorsing the same. In 1809 Francesco Cancellieri, a learned man, corroborated by his adhesion Napione's statement. So far the mischief lay in narrow compass. It was reserved for a Genoese, the Barnabite Father Spotorno, to set the stone

rolling. If M. de Lorgues is correct, Spotorno was proud of Columbus as a fellow-citizen, but could not forgive the son of Columbus, whom he accused of having thrown doubt upon the birth-place of his father. His dislike of the son seems to have outweighed his respect for the father, for he caught up greedily the discovery of Napione, which he plagiarized, deriving it immediately from Cancellieri, and he procured to himself great renown of erudition. Having once committed himself, his childish vanity forbade all reconsideration. He was appointed by the city of Genoa to write a preface to a collection of documents relative to Columbus. It was an opportunity not to be lost of venting his wrath upon Fernando, and of establishing still more strongly his own repute as a critic. His official position as the delegate of the Genoese lent weight to his words. Navarrete, a Spaniard, copied him, though he ought to have known better, and before his work was finished Washington Irving had access to it, and then at last the mischief was full fledged and flew away.

Here is the genesis as given by M. de Lorgues:

Voici la filiation bibliographique de cette calomnie : \*

Humboldt l'a tirée de Washington Irving,

Washington Irving l'a tirée de Navarrete,

Navarrete l'a tirée de Spotorno,

Spotorno l'a tirée de Cancellieri,

\* "L'Ambass. de Dieu," p. 382; see also "Christophe Colomb," i. p. 44, seq.



Cancellieri l'a tirée de Napione,  
Napione l'a tirée du procureur Freytas,  
Freytas l'a tirée du bibliographe Nicolao,  
Nicolao l'a tirée de sa lourde cervelle.

If this mighty superstructure rests upon an insufficient basis of external evidence, it has no intrinsic strength to hold it together. Columbus's enemies, numerous enough, could have greatly diminished his credit with the Queen by charging him with vicious living. This was the one thing which they seem to have considered a hopeless attempt. Beatrix Enriquez was of a good and religious family, yet there is not one word of their resentment. Queen Isabella admitted Fernando into her service as a page with his brother Diego, and this she would scarcely have done if he had not been of reputable extraction. The terms of close intimacy maintained by Columbus with Father Juan Perez and the Franciscan community at La Rabida, during the whole time to which the imputation attaches, forbid the suspicion of conduct which would convert all his devout demeanor into odious hypocrisy. All the tenor of his life contradicts the supposition of his guilt. His long absence from Cordova, his devotedness to one great idea, show that he was not the slave of an unworthy passion. If against all this it is urged that Beatrix is scarcely ever mentioned and that she never appears on state occasions, a very simple answer is the possible solution: viz., that she is not mentioned because she

did nothing that required to be mentioned, but lived on quietly with the two boys at Cordova.

Silence is sometimes convincing. When a man has a host of enemies hovering round like eagles ready to pounce upon him the moment he shows any weakness, and if a moral delinquency would be just the kind of weakness which they "would give their eyes" to discover, he not only cannot be leading a bad life, but he must be pure as a saint, if they cannot make it worth their while to come down upon him. We may add to this that Herrera, a most trustworthy historian, according to the Academy of History of Madrid, and by the testimony of Charlevoix, Tiraboschi, and Robertson, says that Columbus was married in Spain, and that another author of great repute, Alvarez de Colmenar, speaks of his having been twice married; that the genealogical trees, of which there are several, uniformly put Diego and Fernando on the same branch; that the boys are always mentioned on terms of equality, even in legal documents; and that we have the words of Columbus himself complaining that he has been long absent from his wife and children. There would seem to be very poor reasons for doubting, and many good, and some very good, reasons for feeling sure, that Doña Beatrix was his lawful wedded wife. And if so, then the poor lady and her husband will be grateful to M. de Lorgues. There is a sort of providential unity of plan com-

bining the past and present in this tardy restoration of honor. Columbus had troubles enough and to spare in life-time: it seemed cruel that when three centuries had passed over his grave new misdeeds should be laid to his account; but as the native tribes of India were alternately the friends and foes of British rule, and Sepoys helped us against Sikhs, and Sikhs a few years later against Sepoys, so the contemporaries of Columbus and his modern admirers have persecuted him in turn, and then rescued him from obloquy. The consent of dispassionate posterity readily dispelled the invidious falsehoods of eye-witnesses, and the unanimous silence of eye-witnesses abundantly disproves the erroneous inference of a later date.\* A black cloud has been lifted from his memory, and in the pure evening air we are free to cast a rapid glance over the landscape of his troubled life. That it was a wonderful life, with broad lights and deep shadows, no one, believer or unbeliever, can well deny: whether it be that the light is due to grace or to intellectual power, and the shadow is heaven-sent tribulation or human vicissitude and mere fortune of war. The Holy Father, when

\* The well-known anecdote about the egg made to stand on end is found by closer scrutiny to rest on almost as unstable a basis as the egg itself did before Columbus flattened one end by breaking it; but it really does not deserve the indignant repudiation which it has received. A great man may once in a way make a sadly pointless joke without ceasing on that account to be a hero or a saint.

asked about the advisability of "introducing the cause" of the servant of God, with worldly wisdom worthy of a prime minister careful not to commit himself, gave the studiously guarded reply, "*Tentare non nocet.*" So it may be said by lesser folk, there is no harm in trying to have a truer knowledge of the man, and if nothing results from the enquiry but the increased conviction that Columbus was an extraordinarily good man and a saint *latiore sensu*, this much at least is worth the doing, and is a duty owing to a much-wronged memory. It is not too late, we are told, to effect a canonization *exceptionali ordine*, and it is never too late to render justice.

Washington Irving begins his "Life of Columbus" with the words, "Of the early days of Christopher Columbus nothing certain is known. The time of his birth, his birthplace, his parentage, are all involved in obscurity, and such has been the perplexing ingenuity of commentators that it is difficult to extricate the truth from the web of conjectures with which it is interwoven." It often happens that in the earlier stages of a discussion it is difficult to estimate the real value of counter-statements, so that a prudent historian shrinks from being too dogmatic; but even in Washington Irving's time there were authentic documents enough before the world to have justified him in pronouncing fearlessly that the time was 1435, and the place Genoa; and the progress of the

discussion since the date at which he wrote, 1826, has placed the matter now beyond the power of all but wilful ignorance to call in question. The Genoese since the beginning of this century have shown much public spirit and a laudable desire to atone for the strange neglect which left their great fellow-townsmen uncommemorated for seventy years and without any fitting monument till 1845. The combined reports of several learned commissions have dissipated the pretensions of Savona, Sacona, Cuccaro, Cogoletto, and may be some other towns and villages. Perhaps little Cogoletto may still refuse to take down its vain-glorious inscription. Columbus's own simple assertion, twice repeated in an authentic paper, that he was born at Genoa, should be alone enough to remove all doubt.\*

His father had been long resident at Genoa. The good man is dismissed by our Protestant historians with the simple mention of his abode and employment, his Christian name being apparently unknown to them. It would almost seem that they only cared to establish through him the fact that Columbus was of Adam's race. He deserves, however, that all that can be made out about him should be recorded, for it is foolish to suppose that a good Christian father like Domenico Co-

\* "Siendo yo nacido en Genova." And again, speaking of Genoa, "Della salí y en ella nací" (*Institucion del Mayorazgo de 22 de Febrero de 1498*; *Colleccion diplomática*, docum. n. cxxi.)

lombo the wool-comber had not a very great deal indeed to do with the formation of that unflinching character which bore down all opposition, and lived through all discouragement to accomplish a great purpose. High principle, and the honesty of soul which defies seduction and hates as the gates of hell\* all that is mean and sordid, are seldom the acquisitions of later life. They commonly come almost as by a *traductio animarum* from the parents, and are fully developed in childhood, before the early training of home has been supplemented by the skilled labors of schoolmasters and learned professors. Domenico, though never rich, did not feel the pressure of actual poverty till a series of little reverses had reduced his income, and old age and anxiety had begun to prey upon his health. He worked hard to support his family of four sons and a daughter.† At the time of the birth of his eldest son he was living in a house, his own property, with shop and garden, outside the walls of Genoa, near the gate of Sant' Andrea, on the Bisagno road. He

\* Ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ἔμῳς ἀίδαο πύλῃσιν  
 "Ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἄλλο δὲ βάζει.  
 (*Iliad*, ix. 312.)

† Christopher, Bartholomew, John Pellegrino, and James. Washington Irving counts only three sons, omitting John Pellegrino, who died in early manhood. James was such an invalid that his father found him much more a burden than a help. Giovanni Colombo, the grandfather of Christopher, lived at Quinto, and seems to have possessed some modest competence. Domenico married Susanna, daughter of James Fontanarossa, of the village of Bisagno.

possessed also a little freehold in the valley of Nura, and some patches of land in the neighborhood of Quinto. He strove to improve his resources by combing wool, and had also a cloth factory on a diminutive scale, giving employment to two men. In this suburban residence Columbus saw the light of day. He was baptized in the ancient Church of San Stefano, at that time standing on a little hill apart. It is the church now known as San Stefano deli' Arco. Modern research agreeing with local tradition has established this point against the often-repeated statement, disproved by comparison of dates, that the baptism took place in the house in the Via di Mulcento. Some years later Domenico found it advantageous to let his own house, probably to be used as a roadside inn, and he became a tenant of the Benedictine Fathers, hiring from them a little house in the steep and narrow Via di Mulcento, which was in the part of the town where the wool-combers chiefly congregated. There are extant several receipts for rent of this house paid by Domenico. Later the Colombo family migrated to Savona, in the hope, not realized, of mending their trade prospects, and there Christopher, taking with him his little boy Diego, visited his aged father in 1485, after his unsuccessful application to the republics of Genoa and Venice, and the pitiful attempt of John the Second of Portugal to filch from him the fruit of long and



earnest study. His mother was then dead, and perhaps it was on this occasion that the old man went back to Genoa. He lived to know that his son had discovered a world.

Christopher was a precocious boy, and quickly learned reading, writing, and arithmetic, and drawing and painting, but geography was his passion. His father, proud of his son's attainments, pinched himself to procure him a good education, and somewhat ambitiously sent him at ten years of age to the University of Padua. There he no doubt acquired the seeds of knowledge which he knew so well afterwards how to develop, but it is clear that he did not make much actual progress, and at the age of twelve he was removed by his father, most likely from inability to meet the expense any longer, and he worked at his father's trade for the next two years. Perhaps his son Fernando, who denies this, only meant that there was not a formal apprenticeship. The sea was, however, his destined field of action, and his turn for geography was of that practical kind which finds pleasure indeed in studying maps and brooding over the conjectures of famous explorers, but with much greater pleasure still learns to trace out new lines of coast in a caravel. At fourteen he went to sea, as he tells us himself. Englishmen will scarcely see anything in this eventful choice except the natural preference of a spirited boy brought up in a sea-



port town. Schoolmasters know how greedily English boys, even in these prosaic days, devour tales of the sea, and what a strange fascination there is to many young minds in the thought of wandering at will over vast spaces of unfathomed sea, with no disagreeable reminiscences of heaving billows to spoil the happy dream.

“Oh! who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,  
And danced in triumph o’er the waters wide,  
Th’ exulting sense, the pulses’ madd’ning play,  
That thrills the wand’rer of that trackless way?”

There is no need to wonder at the step taken by young Columbus, more especially when to sit upon a bench combing wool was the lively alternative; but to ascribe the choice to the most purely natural motives is by no means to treat with less respect the special supervision of an overruling Providence at the outset of a great career, for indeed more frequently than not God leads men by the path of their own natural character even to the sublimest apostolate.

There was not the same hard and fast line in those days as in these, separating the navy and merchant service, and a commander apparently was named either admiral or arch-pirate according to the political views of the speaker. We certainly find Columbus in the first years of his sailor life engaged in expeditions of a somewhat dubious character. He served under two celebrated captains of his own name, and probably distantly related to his family—Colombo

the elder, the "arch-pirate," and a nephew of the same, called Colombo the younger, both honorably distinguished for good service against the Turks. Life on sea in the Mediterranean at that period seems to have been conducted on the liberal principles explained in the "Odyssey." There was incessant fighting going on between Christian princes by land and sea, and the Musulman was the common enemy of all. No wonder if there was some little confusion occasionally about just and unjust wars, or the exact lines of demarcation between naval enterprise and privateering and piracy. At any rate, it was magnificent schooling for one designed to take command of men who were bold adventurers even when they were not lawless desperadoes. At this time we must suppose that the effort to diminish the number of the Turks, those enemies of God and man,\* gave legitimate employment to

\* In the light of the recent "atrocities," it is more easy to form a notion of the terror caused by the Turks in their plenitude of power, and how dreadful was the fate from which St. Clare's intercession saved her community. "When the Saracens were besieging Assisi, and trying to effect an entrance into Clare's convent, she, though ill, caused herself to be carried to the gate, and with her a vessel containing the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist; and in that place she prayed: 'Deliver not, O Lord! to beasts souls confessing thee, and guard thy handmaids whom thou hast redeemed with thy Precious Blood.' At this prayer a voice was heard: 'I will guard you always.' Then some of the Saracens turned and fled, and others who had scaled the wall were struck blind and fell headlong down" (Brev., August 12). It was not mere bigotry which gave to an expedition against "the Infidel" the character of a holy war, and made the thinning of their ranks a sacred duty to soldiers and sailors.

the ardent zeal of young Columbus, and the indirect advancement of the cause of King René would serve to justify in his eyes some daring raids of the old "arch-pirate." When he first assumed command himself it was in the service of this King René, who commissioned him to execute a daring feat which was too much for the courage of his men. He had recourse to stratagem, and by altering the compass led them into action under the idea that they were homeward-bound.

The energy and enlightened policy of the truly admirable Prince Henry of Portugal, whose mother was an English lady, the sister of our Henry IV., had made Lisbon at this epoch the great centre of maritime activity. Bartholomew Colombo was already established there as a distinguished cosmographer, making maps and globes and nautical instruments with much applause, when, by accident or design, his elder brother, to whom he was warmly attached, and whose companion in arms he was worthy to be, arrived to take up his abode there. This was about 1470, and the hair of Christopher was white even then, according to Las Casas. What Washington Irving says of him at this stage of his life has a deep meaning for his Catholic readers, more particularly considering that it expresses the outcome of what might have been supposed, in the disappointing absence of all details, to have been

almost the wild, boisterous life of a modified buccaneer. "He was moderate and simple in diet and apparel, eloquent in discourse, engaging and affable with strangers, and of an amiableness and suavity in domestic life that strongly attached his household to his person. His temper was naturally irritable, but he subdued it by the magnanimity of his spirit, comporting himself with a courteous and gentle gravity, and never indulging in any intemperance of language. Throughout his life he was noted for a strict attention to the offices of religion, observing rigorously the fasts and ceremonies of the Church; nor did his piety consist in mere forms, but partook of that lofty and solemn enthusiasm with which his whole character was strongly tinged." It is evident that he had not amid his roving and fighting forgotten God, and he would not have been so gentle after such rude training if he had not habitually practised extraordinary self-restraint, which only his deep sense of religion could have given him the power to do. He could never have been, under the circumstances, as good as Washington Irving declares unless he had been vastly better than ever Washington Irving imagined. His virtue was of a more spiritual kind than British self respect or devotion to duty, and involved, we may be sure, not a little of Christian mortification of will and readiness to carry the cross for the love of Christ. In Lis-

bon Columbus used to attend Mass every morning at the church of the Convent of All Saints. Before long he married Doña Felipa de Perestrello, the daughter of an Italian gentleman whom Prince Henry, for his distinguished services, had created Governor of Porto Santo, bestowing upon him large but calamitously unproductive estates in that island.\* However, the family, though poor, held so high a position in the country, and were so much in favor at the court, that the approval which they certainly gave to the marriage is an argument that Columbus was not regarded as a man of plebeian origin or a mere needy adventurer. This connection was very opportune, and gave both fresh stimulus to his maritime propensities and great increase of means for their gratification. The widow of Don Bartholomew Perestrello spoke much to her son-in-law of her husband's discoveries, and made over to him many interesting log-books and charts of his various vogages. He soon after visited with his wife the extensive rabbit-warren in Porto Santo, and it was there that his eldest son Diego was born. The place itself, on the western verge of the habitable world, was suggestive to a man much addicted to geography, and there was no lack of travellers' tales

\*The rabbits seem to have had their own way on the Governor's estate, and systematically devoured all the produce of the soil till they ruined him in the end.

in those days of mysterious yearning after the unknown. In 1474 he was in correspondence with Paolo Toscanelli, physician of Florence, who was a kind of grand referee to the explorers and cosmographers of his time, and was highly esteemed at the Papal Court. A letter of Toscanelli to Columbus, dated June 25, 1474, is extant, in which he shows lively interest in the proposal of Columbus to sail westward, and takes notice of his ardent desire to spread the knowledge of the faith. "A deep religious sentiment," says again Washington Irving, "mingled with his meditations and gave them at times a tinge of superstition, but it was of a sublime and lofty kind." *Superstition* is a convenient word which is used to tone down what might otherwise seem extravagant praise; but to say that Columbus was superstitious because he considered himself the envoy of God is to prejudge the question. When once the great resolve was taken it was never more laid aside. This was the real point of departure in the discovery of America, not that other moment when Ferdinand and Isabella signed the conditions conferring the vice-royalty of the Indies on him and his heirs, nor yet the moment when he set sail with an unwilling crew of conscript sailors from Palos. The idea never went from his mind; it only gained strength from rebuffs and delays, cold answers and cruel evasions. We see the grandeur of mind of Co-

lumbus best in those *eighteen* years of weary waiting and hoping against hope, when heaven and earth seemed to conspire against him, when opinions were divided about him, and some considered him a dangerous lunatic, and some more than half a heretic, and even his well-wishers for the most part thought that he indulged in much unprofitable dreaming, while all the time he saw and felt the vigorous years of his manhood waning fast, and death perhaps approaching to carry him away with his mighty purpose unfulfilled. Perhaps something within him answered that he would not die till he had carried Christ across the water.

Robertson\* says correctly that Columbus made his first application to the Senate of his native Genoa. It was refused. Columbus was better known in Lisbon than at Genoa, and as Genoese navigation had been till then confined to the Mediterranean, the ocean-voyage was an idea too new to be fully grasped by the senators. It is not certain but highly probable that from Genoa Columbus turned to Venice. A polite refusal was his only answer. From Venice he paid a visit to his father at Savona in 1470, and from his own slender means did his best to help the old

\* "History of America," bk. ii. Irving says, bk. i. ch. vii.: "This (viz., the application to the crown of Portugal) is the first proposition of which we have any clear and indisputable record," etc. Subsequent research has removed the doubt.



man, then seventy years of age, and weighed down by accumulated misfortunes. From Savona he returned to Portugal and laid his scheme before John the Second, who, though he had something of the enterprising spirit of his great uncle, Prince Henry of happy memory, was considerably startled by the boldness of the project. Nowadays when little boys under governess tuition have more definite ideas of geography than Paolo Toscanelli had then, and when not little caravels are coasting nervously but materialistic steamers are steering along great circles to the ends of the earth, and there is a beaten highway from Liverpool to New York almost as clearly traced as a Roman road, it is really difficult to get ourselves back into the ideas of pre-Columbite times :

“ Ille robur et æs triplex  
Circa pectus erat qui fragilem truci  
Commisit pelago ratem  
PRIMUS.”

What Columbus proposed to do was absolutely speaking a very bold design, for no captain now would try a long voyage in such ships as they had then, but *relatively* speaking and judged by the standard of those days, and in the face of the very real dangers of unexplored seas, and the far more awful terrors with which fancy invested the distant recesses of the ocean never yet seen by human eye, it was more than daring. It seemed like tempting God, and madness and self-destruc-



tion were terms that suited well the act of men who could indeed make the outward voyage if so they felt inclined, but who could neither control their subsequent fate nor reasonably entertain a hope of ever coming back. However, John the Second thought the matter over, and had other interviews with Columbus, and came to look upon the scheme as less condemnable and not entirely chimerical. He first appointed three commissioners, and then convoked his council to pronounce upon the feasibility of the undertaking. The judgment of both tribunals was adverse. The king would in spite of this have given his consent if it had not been for the high price at which Columbus valued his services. He set forth his claims and offered his conditions more like an independent sovereign making a treaty with a brother monarch than a subject presenting a petition. It is only another trait which helps us to know the man. He came to the king with his Sibylline books and named his price, and if the king wanted the Sibylline books, nine, or six, or three, he would have to make up his mind to pay the unalterable sum. John in an evil hour listened to bad advisers, and without the cognizance of Columbus sent off a ship to explore the Western route and see if the project was worth entertaining. Of course these messengers of the king, destitute of all inspiration or enthusiasm, soon came back to say the voyage was an impossible

one. Portugal had the shame of a petty larceny, and though John in his repentance would have gladly given Columbus what he asked, a deaf ear was turned to all further proposals of one who no longer deserved to be trusted. Columbus got together some little effects as secretly as he could, and with his son Diego made the best of his way out of Portugal at the close of 1484. There was reason enough for his flight in the fear of what his enemies at the court might do; but if he also left some debts unpaid, as Irving on slight grounds supposes,\* his departure could still be justified by necessity, and the intention of repayment on the first possibility would save conscience and good name. He sailed for Genoa, and solicitously pressed his offer upon the Government, but the fleet of the Republic was required for home service and not a vessel could be spared. It was at this time that he took little Diego, whose mother was now dead, to see his grandfather, as has been already mentioned.

Columbus now cast his eyes round the European thrones. The Christian spirit of Spain, and her power on sea, seemed to hold out hope of the help he sought. There were wonderful stories about his first landing in Portugal. His arrival in Spain is also mysterious. He is first heard of as a vagrant asking for a little bread at the gate

\* "Life of Columbus," bk. i. c. viii.

of the Franciscan Convent of La Rabida, close to the little sea-port town of Palos in Andalusia. He had his little boy with him, and was on his way to Huelva to see a sister-in-law, with whom, in spite of her poverty, he no doubt wished to leave Diego. Irving says he was going to Pedro Correa, his brother-in-law, formerly Governor of Porto Santo, but this is now known to be a mistake. The father-guardian of the convent, Fra Juan Perez de Marchena, found his friend the physician, Garcia Hernandez, in conversation with the stranger in the porch. Some good angel had certainly guided Columbus to La Rabida, for Friar Juan Perez was no ordinary man. Scarcely another man in Spain was so well prepared by nature and study to appreciate the great thoughts of that strange mendicant. Washington Irving does justice to the hearty friendship, but scarcely to the scientific attainments, of the good Franciscan, for he seems to suppose that Garcia Hernandez was called in to supply the knowledge needed.

Father Perez had been the confessor of Queen Isabella, but a court life was less to his liking than retirement and study. His love for mathematics and cosmography was only the handmaid of his zeal for souls. He longed for the discovery of new lands, in order that Christ might be preached to more men; and with him, as with Columbus at Porto Santo, the place of his abode was

well suited to feed his restless imagination and his Christian hopes. He had built a kind of observatory on the roof of his monastery, and he spent much of his spare time in contemplating the stars by night and the sea by day. Did that *mare tenebrosum* really bound the world, or had it a further shore with races of men to be evangelized? There was infinite room for speculation where all was conjecture. Some cosmographers thought that the *mare tenebrosum* could be sailed across in three years, and some thought that it was of indefinite extent. Fra Juan Perez had reached the advanced stage of venturing to doubt the impracticability of a voyage across, when Columbus appeared at his convent-gate, and soon the doubt of an alleged impossibility gave place to the ardent desire of an actual accomplishment. The father-guardian was a good friend from the first. He made Columbus live at his convent till a favorable opportunity should present itself for laying his plans before Ferdinand and Isabella; and we cannot doubt that it was at this period of his life that he acquired that astonishing acquaintance with patristic theology which must have seemed to the bishops and doctors of the Junta of Salamanca a curious result of a sailor's education. There is no record of his conventual life; for, most unfortunately, the archives of La Rabida perished utterly in some revolution of the present century, the library being pillaged and the manuscripts de-

stroyed, and the convent itself was finally abandoned on the suppression of religious houses in 1834.\*

It is no unfair surmise that he spent his time in religious preparation for his great work. We know how he ever looked upon himself as a son of St. Francis, hastening back to his cell at La Rabida on his return from the first voyage to give thanks to God and Our Blessed Lady, before he thought of presenting himself to be glorified by all Spain; and we know that after his second voyage, disgusted with the ingratitude of the world even then, though he had not yet been sent back from America † in chains, he wore publicly the habit of St. Francis, not, as Irving suggests, in fulfilment of some vow, but because he was meditating a final retreat to La Rabida to end his days in religion. But there remained much to do and suffer yet.

Father Perez had an influential friend at court, the Hieronymite Father Fra Fernando de Talavera, Prior of Our Lady of Prado at Valladolid, confessor of the king and queen, a man of learning and virtue, and he felt that, in recommending

\* The Duke de Montpensier in 1854 undertook the restoration of the monastery and the church. The cell of the father-guardian was especially cared for.

† The very name "America" is an ingratitude that cries to heaven. Amerigo Vespucci falsely asserted that he had discovered the continent, and the lie has been immortalized.

Columbus to the intercession of such a man, he was almost ensuring the successful issue of his application. But the learning of the Prior of Prado was not in the cosmographical line, and he was at all times unwilling to push his right of patronage. The letter of Father Perez only served to show that he himself had too readily assented to the dreams of this unknown enthusiast, and Fernando de Talavera had no mind to assist the delusion. He listened with perfect politeness to the explanations of Columbus, but he did not intend at that time, more particularly when the attention of the sovereigns was concentrated on the Moorish war, to allow any idle dreams to molest their sacred ears. Columbus was helpless, and had to fall back upon caligraphy and map-making for his support. This was at Cordova, where the sovereigns, always in movement, happened then to be. It was during this painful suspense that he married Doña Beatriz Enriquez. The lady seems to have been fascinated first. She must have encountered much opposition and ridicule from her own immediate friends and from her kinsmen of the powerful Araña family, but she was in earnest. Poverty and anxiety could never vulgarize Columbus, and a kind-hearted and romantic girl might easily find him worth loving. His marriage did not change his plans. When he found that Talavera was a hindrance, not a help, he wrote with his own hand a characteristic letter to the

king, in which he confined himself to stating facts. No notice was taken of the letter. He succeeded, however, in making the acquaintance of Antonio Geraldini, formerly Papal Nuncio, who at the queen's request had returned to Spain to be tutor to her eldest daughter, and was by him introduced to the great Cardinal Mendoza, Grand Chancellor of Castile. The keen eye of Mendoza recognized at once the extraordinary merit of Columbus, and he felt it a duty to obtain for him an audience. Columbus, careless about his humble dress and foreign accent, presented himself (they are his own words) as "sent on an embassy" by the goodness of God to the most powerful of Christian princes and the most zealous for the faith. He spoke to them of "serving our Lord, spreading the knowledge of his name and the light of faith among many nations." He had held out temporal motives also to tempt Genoa and Venice. Perhaps he thought that Isabella was less mercenary, or perhaps his stay with the Franciscans had made him more unworldly. The service of God our Lord held evidently the first place in his esteem, and that is a point too lightly passed over by most of our informants. Isabella seems from that moment to have entertained a genuine esteem for Columbus, and was his friend for life. Ferdinand, with his usual caution, commissioned Fernando de Talavera to call a council of learned men to



examine into the case. The court was then at Salamanca, a place of great learning. To the council were summoned all the men of science of the University of Salamanca, professors present and past, and they met in the Dominican convent of St. Stephen. Fra Juan Perez de Marchena, unhappily, was not one of the board, and the chief cosmographer of Spain, Jayme Ferrer, the learned lapidary of Burgos, was absent in the East. Talavera was not quite the president Columbus would have chosen, and all came disposed to judge harshly of a man who in his pride preferred his own conclusions to the united learning of mankind. Many silly objections, as we know, were made. Texts from Scripture and the fathers were quoted to disprove the roundness of the earth and the existence of men with their feet above their heads. Columbus was a little hampered in his answers by his resolve not to be too circumstantial in relating his plans, for fear of exposing himself a second time to the perfidious treatment he had experienced from King John of Portugal; but he displayed marvellous erudition of an unexpected kind, and seemed to have the writings of philosophers and fathers of the Church at his command. The Dominican Fathers in whose house the conferences were held were almost alone in their favorable judgment of his cause, and they also, though the examination lasted long, generously entertained him all the time,



and even paid the expenses of his journey. The Father Diego de Deza, their first professor of theology, was completely convinced by his reasoning, and gained over the leading men of the university. But the majority voted the project chimerical, while the rest seem to have thought it scarcely practical, and the council broke up with no very definite declaration at the time. Before the council dispersed the court had left Salamanca. One consequence, at all events, was the increased consideration for a man who had given so much trouble. He was regarded henceforth as an important person, and was on several occasions summoned to court, having his expenses paid ; but nothing was done, and truly the Moorish war might well be a valid excuse at this date (1487) for postponing other business. The bitterness of suspense was made more bitter by scoffs and taunts and abundant ridicule.

If the conscience of Columbus had been less tender, he might now have had what he wished without further delay ; for John of Portugal renewed his offers, and was in no frame of mind for disputing over the terms. But Ferdinand had given no definitive refusal, and, while his appeal to the crown of Spain was actually pending, Columbus did not consider himself at liberty to take service under any other prince. Perhaps, also, he had made one of his irrevocable resolutions to have no more dealing with a man who had once

proved false. He wrote to John, and from the answer, which is extant, it would seem that he expressed some apprehension about his personal safety in Portugal. The king promised him safe conduct. This is the chief reason to Irving and others for thinking he left Portugal under pressure of debt; but though the fact may have been as they suppose, the argument is obviously inconclusive, for many causes of uneasiness might suggest themselves to one who had powerful and jealous enemies in the country. It is a little difficult to trace the history of the application made by Bartholomew Columbus to Henry the Seventh of England. The usual account is that Christopher sent his brother on that embassy about the time of his own departure from Portugal; but this cannot be correct, for a map presented by Bartholomew to Henry bears date 1488, and Bartholomew was certainly otherwise employed in 1486 and 1487.\* On the other hand, it would not have been in keeping with the upright character and consistent conduct of Columbus to solicit the aid of England and refuse the aid of Portugal while he was prosecuting his suit in Spain. Robertson says that Bartholomew started on the mission, but that, being captured by pirates and subsequently in great indigence in London, he could not present himself till three years later.

\* Irving's "Life of Columbus," bk. i. ch. viii.

He adds that Henry gave him a favorable reception. Columbus now followed the court as it moved from place to place in the prosecution of the war, and he must have watched with aching heart the long round of festivities which greeted at Seville first the capture of Baza and then the marriage of the young Isabella of Spain with Don Alonzo, heir presumptive to the crown of Portugal. Columbus knew that there would be no peace till Isabella had Granada in her hands, and that the recommencement of the war would mean an indefinite postponement of his cause, so he pressed at once for the formal reply of the Junto of Salamanca. The Prior of Prado, appointed in the interval Bishop of Avila, was instructed to furnish it, and it was to the effect that "the project rested on a false basis, since the author of it asserted as a truth what was an impossibility." Even after this answer Isabella would not dismiss the case, and Talavera was instructed to say that as soon as the war was over there should be a fresh discussion.

Columbus by this time was well inured to delay and contumely, but the delay seemed now likely to be interminable, and still he could not leave Catholic Spain without one effort more. It was not Beatrix Enriquez who kept him spell-bound there, for his affection had never been permitted yet to interfere with the ruling idea of his life ; but Spain was even now fighting the infidel,

and Spain deserved to be the patron of the Cross. If the king and queen were too busy with the campaign, there were other Spaniards of almost regal power and wealth who could fit out his little armament. He applied to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, but he also was busy with the war. He turned to the Duke of Medina Celi, and this great nobleman consented to furnish him with all things needful; but at the last moment he bethought him that such an enterprise scarcely belonged to a subject, and he asked the queen to give her sanction. She returned a gracious answer, but begged him to leave the expedition to the crown, and she summoned Columbus and told him that he really must wait till the close of the war, and he should then receive full satisfaction. But the end of the war was an event of the uncertain future, and Columbus felt that his time was growing with every wasted year more precious. He made up his mind to go at once to the King of France,\* who had written an encouraging letter. He went first to La Rabida to take Diego from the care of Father Perez and leave him with little Fernando in his wife's hands at Cordova. We may imagine the grief of the father-guardian to see his friend, after so many years of patient hope, return with his prayer unheard. He called in Don Garcia Hernandez, and

\* Robertson says he was preparing to go to England ("History of America," bk. ii.)

they put Columbus steadily through his proofs, with the objections to them, and solutions, like another Junto of Salamanca. They were both completely convinced, and Father Perez felt that it was time for prompt action. As the former confessor of the queen he felt that he could speak and be listened to, and so he wrote a letter to Isabella, but he was determined that it should be placed without delay in her royal hands, and they sent it accordingly by the hands of Sebastian Rodriguez, an experienced sailor and a trusty envoy. It found the queen at Santa Fé. In a fortnight Rodriguez returned with an invitation to the Franciscan father and a message of encouragement to Columbus. The poor monk had no mule of his own to saddle, as Irving supposed, so Columbus had to borrow one for him. He obtained the ear of the queen, and his pleading was irresistible. Columbus was summoned to court anew; but now fate was hanging over Granada, and all things human might wait a few days to watch the death agony of a war that had lasted eight hundred years. In the midst of the rejoicings the queen kept her promise and sent for Columbus. She had full faith in him. She accepted his project, but the terms had to be arranged, and the evil genius of Columbus, the Bishop of Avila, was appointed to arrange them. Years of waiting had not changed the exalted views of Columbus. He came with his Sibyl-

line books once more. The price, to Talavera's narrow mind, was too high to pay. Isabella, against her better judgment, was persuaded to say so to Columbus, and he took his departure. Spain would not pay the price, and the price could not be altered,





## CHAPTER II.

COLUMBUS mounted his mule and rode from Santa Fé in the direction of Cordova, fully convinced at last that eighteen good years of life had been spent to no purpose, and that he would have to begin all over again at some other court the thankless task of suing for the loan of three little ships and a handful of men ; for this was really all that he had asked the Spanish sovereigns to pay him in advance. The haughty demands which the Bishop of Avila could not brook were contingent upon the success of a design which, if it were ever realized, would make Ferdinand and Isabella the debtors of their long-suffering petitioner beyond all their power to pay him back. A viceroyalty to him and his heirs in the event of great discoveries would not be deemed an excessive recompense, and in the event of slight success or failure would not press heavily upon the donors. The Duke of Medina Celi, as we have seen, was well able and quite willing to provide from his own private fleet the paltry apparatus needed, and it was certainly unlike Isabella's generous character or her usual line of conduct to request

that nobleman to cede to the crown the glory of the expedition, and then to refuse after all to undertake it herself. Columbus, if he was human, must have included in one grand sweeping condemnation court and courtiers, and learned men and selfish politicians; and even Isabella could scarcely hope to escape censure. His feelings as he rode away would be worth the analysis, but the data are wanting. A man of his sanguine temperament would need all his Christian philosophy to bear up against such a disappointment. He never lost faith in his cause, for he felt that the cause was God's, in whose hands are the hearts of princes.

Fortunately for Isabella, the Bishop of Avila was not the only counsellor at hand. Luis de St. Angel, Receiver of Ecclesiastical Revenues, and Alonzo de Quintanilla, Comptroller-General of Finance, at whose house Columbus had been staying, were full of grief. St. Angel rushed into the presence of the queen, and, in the fervor of his zeal for Christendom and Spain, he even reproached her for the unworthy part she was playing under evil dictation. Isabella thanked him for his plain speaking. Alonzo de Quintanilla supported the remonstrance. Father Juan Perez was in the queen's chapel close by on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament, praying with all his heart and soul that God, for the Five Sacred Wounds of Jesus, would vouchsafe to guide her



decision. Her eyes were opened. The thought of the vast interests at stake darted into her mind with the force of an inspiration, and her resolve was formed. No power on earth could change it then, not even her husband's unwillingness to move in the matter; for she was a sovereign in her own right, and as such, and for her own crown of Castile, she undertook the enterprise, and, as the war had drained the royal coffers of Castile, she was ready to pledge her jewels to raise the funds required. However, money was a very small consideration at that stage of the proceedings. Ferdinand of Aragon agreed to lend to Isabella of Castile the sum required, and in due time was careful to exact repayment. An officer was sent in haste to overtake Columbus. When he came up with him at the bridge of Pinos, two leagues from Granada, his first summons failed to induce the fugitive to retrace his steps; but as soon as Columbus heard of Isabella's noble declaration, he surrendered at discretion, And well he might. She had set aside the verdict of the Junta, representing as it did the learning of Spain; she had rejected the advice of her confessor, to which she usually showed a ready deference; she had acted against the opinion of Ferdinand, whose wishes at other times had for her the force of laws; and she deserved that her royal word, once given, should be trusted. Good Father Juan Perez, now that his prayer had been so fully heard,

fancied his work was done, and hurried back to his convent of La Rabida ; but it was only, as the event showed, to make himself scarcely less useful to Columbus by his business like co-operation at Palos de Moguer than by his valuable prayers at Santa Fé.

Columbus was now almost another man. He was high in favor. Indeed, the queen gave him so warm a welcome that it was evident she wished to make amends for past neglect. No more time was taken up in haggling about terms. All that had been asked for was conceded without a word, and Isabella, with delicate thoughtfulness, gracefully added to the more formal grant a personal favor which must have been particularly grateful to a sensitive and wounded spirit, appointing Don Diego one of the pages of honor to Prince Juan, a distinction coveted for their sons by the highest grandees of Spain.\*

The articles of the capitulation, as it was termed, were with all convenient despatch drawn up by

\* Fernando is not mentioned on this occasion, but his appointment must have followed closely that of his half-brother, for both were introduced together at court by Don Bartholomew Columbus while their father was absent on his first voyage. In 1498, after the death of Prince Juan, Isabella took them both into her own service, and then at all events she was so far from showing that she considered Don Fernando in any sense inferior to his brother that, as it happened, she actually appointed the younger brother first, with one day's interval. It is manifest that in her mind no discredit attached itself to Fernando's origin. Had there been really any social disparity between the admiral's sons, both the etiquette of that punctilious court and the severity of Isabella's moral code would have compelled her to recognize it.

the queen's secretary, and Ferdinand affixed his signature conjointly, according to the articles of marriage, but he took no further interest in the matter, and Isabella singly was the life and soul of the whole enterprise. She issued her orders for the necessary arrangements. It happened that the little seaport of Palos, which Columbus knew so well, had been for some misconduct condemned to furnish to the crown one year's service of two caravels, armed and manned. Advantage was taken of this existing obligation, and the caravels were now required to be in readiness in ten days, and to be placed at the disposal of Columbus. This might be a saving of actual expense, but it was an unwise economy; for it gave to what at the best would have been a sufficiently unpopular commission the character of a penal conscription, and this upon an occasion when volunteers were most desirable, and forced men were sure to prove dangerous and possibly altogether unmanageable. The royal mandate was read to the natives of Palos in the Church of St. George by the notary public, on the requisition of Columbus, who was accompanied, as a matter of course, by the Franciscan father-guardian. It was also read at Moguer. The authorities signified their submission; but Spanish seamen had wills of their own, and when they knew the nature of the service for which they were ordered to hold themselves in readiness, they showed ex-

treme repugnance to give in their names. Not even a royal order, or the promise of immunity from legal prosecution, and of four months' pay at a higher rate than usual, to be made in advance at the time of embarkation, could induce men to offer themselves for so mad a venture as a voyage due west into the "Mare Tenebrosum." \* They valued their lives, and these were not forfeit to the crown. In anything reasonable they would obey their highnesses, but they would not be sent off on a fool's errand or agree to make up a forlorn hope for anybody's asking. And these were not timid landmen, but hardy sailors.

The first proclamation was on May 23, 1492. On June 20 more peremptory orders were issued, empowering the magistrates of the coast of Andalusia to press into the service at their discretion any Spanish ships with their crews. Juan de Peñalosa was sent to enforce the execution with pains and penalties, and, acting upon his orders, he at once seized a vessel named the *Pinta*, joint property of two citizens of Palos, who

\* *Omne i notum pro magnifico habetur.* The gigantic bird, "the roc," known to our childhood in the history of "Sinbad the Sailor," is seriously mentioned by a lawyer, Fernando de Rojas, in a preface to a book published in 1492. The roc, by popular belief, infested the Mare Tenebrosum, and had an amiable habit of pouncing down upon even large ships gone astray, and carrying them bodily off in its beak to the clouds for the amusement of breaking them up with its talons and dropping them bit by bit, planks or men, into the awful abyss. Even grave writers seem not to know how much to believe of these childish fictions.

gave themselves up for lost, and cursed the Genoese adventurer. It was no easy matter to fit out the *Pinta*. Materials were not forthcoming; ship-carpenters were opportunely indisposed; every obstacle which ingenuity could devise was thrown in Peñalosa's way. He did not make happy progress. Three ships were wanted, and as yet he had but one. If it had not been for the active help of that first and firmest friend, the Father-Guardian of La Rabida, Columbus might have seen his cherished project fall through finally, not for want of letters-patent, but for want of men. A Franciscan, by his vocation, is at home among the poor. Father Perez, sometimes with and sometimes without his friend, made his rounds among the towns-people of Palos. Both his position and his personal character made him welcome and gave him influence. He maintained the feasibility of the voyage, and made light of imaginary terrors; nor did he fail, friar as he was, and speaking to Catholics, to insinuate motives of a loftier kind than thirst for discovery or desire of profit. He was defending his own profound convictions all the time. He was thinking also of souls to be saved far away beyond that "dark sea" which barred them from the light of the Gospel. If he could not communicate to lesser souls the noble confidence he felt himself, at least he did much to lessen prejudice and soften down hostility; and when glorious success

had crowned that westward voyage, his energetic efforts were gratefully remembered.

One service rendered by Father Juan Perez in Palos was the introduction of Columbus to Martin Alonzo Pinzon. The meeting would assuredly have taken place in any case, but we may reasonably doubt, in the first place, whether the Pinzon family would have entered so warmly into the views of Columbus, and, in the second place, whether they would have been able to overcome the reluctance of uneducated sailors, if Father Perez had not brought his scientific reputation and his local popularity to the aid of the stranger. Peñalosa, with his royal warrant to impound ships and impress sailors, would soon have made Columbus an object of general execration. The Pinzons might have shared the common feeling, or might have had little power to allay it. It is not necessary to determine the exact value of the Franciscan's intervention, but there can be no doubt that he once again made himself very useful at a critical moment.

The three brothers Pinzon, all experienced mariners, lived in the best house in Palos. Martin Alonzo, the eldest, had lately returned from Rome, with apparently some fresh information which predisposed him to favor the idea of Columbus. He brought, or said he brought, a map given him by one of Innocent the Eighth's librarians, upon which an unnamed land was marked

in the far west. Whether it be that some of the many floating ideas, such as had already arrived at some definiteness of conception in the brain of Father Juan Perez, had taken shape also to the mind of the Pope's librarian—or, by a still more simple hypothesis, that Paolo Toscanelli, who was a frequent visitor in Rome, had mentioned the speculations of Columbus to the librarian or his friends, and that the map was constructed from the ideas so communicated—it is in any case so easy to account for the existence of such a map at that time that it is a gratuitous impertinence to accuse, as Humboldt does,\* Pinzon and Columbus, and, therefore, though he does not name him, the inseparable Father Perez, of having concocted the story of the map to take in the simple sailors. There was no such theory at the time, and yet the map was much spoken of, and it is almost equally impossible to believe that a public secret of the kind could have been inviolably kept, whether the accessory witnesses were accomplices or dupes. The Roman map would not be worth a passing mention here for its own sake. With it or without it, Pinzon was inclined to believe in land to the west. However, the abso-

\* Irving only remarks in a note: "Among other extravagancies, it was asserted that before the sovereigns accepted the proposition of Columbus, Pinzon had prepared to go, at his own cost and risk, in two of his own ships, in search of lands in the west, of which he had some notice from papers found in the Papal library at Rome" (bk. v. c. v.)



lute groundlessness of Humboldt's supposition may teach his readers to be cautious when he elsewhere asperses the character of Columbus. Rome was by no means unconscious of what was taking place. Not her indifference to maritime discovery, but her unwarrantable interference, is the stereotyped complaint of modern writers.\*

\* Much shallow invective has been hurled at the heads of successive popes for their assignment to Christian princes of lands belonging to "infidels." Deeper thinkers may find that there is more in the matter than a contemptuous word can finish. It is, of course, unfair to take the question out of its historic context. The action of popes in the fifteenth century must not be considered by reference to an altered state of things in the nineteenth century. A course of action not contrary to the natural law or the positive command of God may, by force of circumstances, be right at one epoch, wrong at another. In the fifteenth century the Gospel formed the *theoretical* basis of all national and social and domestic relations. *Theoretically*, it was admitted by all that the first duties of kings to their people, and of parents to their children, were to provide the means of salvation. *Theoretically*, eternal interests were supposed to outweigh all sublunary considerations. Again, in the fifteenth century the popes were by some considered the divinely-appointed guardians of the souls of all men, with the right, if not always the power, to force civil governments to do their duty to God. Even those who denied to the popes this semi-civil supremacy still unanimously looked to them as arbitrators on a large scale. All Christian princes regarded the Court of Rome as mainly concerned in the extension of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, and they accepted its counsel and expostulation without resentment, even when they opposed its political action. Much that would be considered unwarrantable interference now was the normal course of things then. Autonomy is not nearly so definite a right as personal freedom, and its limits are less easy to determine. One man cannot be rightfully possessed by another man; but one body of men can be rightfully governed by another body of men. Does the right of autonomy belong to men by territory, or by blood, or by accidental coalition? Are continents, islands (large or small), and peninsulas intended by Providence to be independent, or do mountain-chains and rivers suffice to mark out districts fitted for self-government? Is autonomy the right of a family, or a class,



Innocent the Eighth died nine days before Columbus started on his first voyage, and his epitaph speaks of the great interest he had taken in the proposal which he did not live to see accomplished. He was himself a Genoese, and it is a tradition in Rome that he had sent his benediction to Columbus, and Columbus speaks of his having enjoyed from the first the favor of the Holy See.

Martin Alonzo Pinzon entered heartily into the scheme, and agreed to accompany Columbus and to provide a beautiful little caravel, the *Niña* (that is, "The Little"), with lateen sails, belonging to Vincent Yañez Pinzon, the youngest of the

or a race? Does the right to choose include the right to change rulers? Or, finally, is the *statute quo*, no matter how it has been arrived at, no matter how much tyranny, how much misery, it involves, to be respected as the sacred ordinance of Heaven? Obviously there is large room for difference of opinion. Unless it be uncharitably assumed that "infallibility" (for popes were as infallible then as now) includes the gift of prophecy, the rulers of the Church are not to be held accountable for the horrible excesses of men who ought to have been Christians. Their intentions, judged by the ideas of those times, may have been purely benevolent. The savage inhabitants of the newly-found countries were either children, to whom no one attributes the right of self-government, or they were men groaning under the worst of all tyrannies, in the utter absence of the saving knowledge of Christ. If many Englishmen would approve of the idea of their taking the King of Ashantee's subjects under their protection, whether they liked it or not, and extending to them the blessings of English law, with immediate cessation of human hecatombs, they only advocate, with some slight alterations, the programme of the much-reviled popes. The difference is that the Ashantees deal with bodies, and Satan only with unimportant souls; but in the fifteenth century souls were quite as real as, and much more important than, bodies, and civil rulers, as we have said, considered that the *salvation* of their subjects not only concerned them, but was even their chief concern.

three brothers, who made himself famous in the sequel. Columbus had engaged to furnish an eighth part of the expenses, and the brothers Pinzon enabled him to fulfil his engagement. Public opinion now began to change. The township of Palos offered to Columbus an old, weather-beaten, but seaworthy vessel, large and heavy, very ill-adapted for the service. Both he and Father Perez thought it the part of wisdom to accept the offer. Columbus caused the vessel to be blessed, changed its name from *La Gallega* to *La Santa Maria*, and selected it for his own command. We are not to suppose that Columbus, in his anxiety to depart, went to sea in vessels which he considered unsafe. Caravels, which were only partially decked, running high at each end, were considered by him the best kind of vessel for his purposes, coasting included, which the ship-building of that date provided. He complained that the *Santa Maria* was too large and unwieldy. She had four masts, two square-rigged and two with lateen sails, and was decked from end to end. Her long-boat was thirty feet in length; and although the attempt to establish her dimensions from this fact alone, by reference to modern ship-building proportions, is, in the altered state of navigation, decidedly unsatisfactory, we still have grounds for conjecturing that in size she would fairly represent one of our old ten-gun brigs.

The *Santa Maria* carried sixty-six persons, of whom not one came from Palos or Moguer. Diego de Araña, nephew of Columbus, sailed with him as Grand Alguazil of the armament, and the list of the crew contains some names known to fame. An Englishman and an Irishman were on board.

Martin Alonzo Pinzon, with his brother, Francis Martin Pinzon, for a lieutenant, had command of the *Pinta*, which numbered thirty on board, all from that neighborhood except one. Even Garcia Hernandez, in spite of his close intimacy with Father Perez, sailed as surgeon in the *Pinta*, not in the *Santa Maria*, so that there was evidently an arrangement in virtue of which the men of the expedition were divided into those from Palos and Moguer and those from other places, Columbus commanding the latter division and the two brothers Pinzon the former.

The *Niña*, commanded by Vincent Yañez Pinzon, carried the remainder of the Palos contingent, twenty-four souls.

As the fated moment drew near, apprehension was sure to revive, even in resolute minds. Columbus, we may be sure, harangued his men, and spoke of trust in Providence. Catholic sailors would feel all the solemnity of the occasion, and would turn, as a matter of course, to the aids of religion. Columbus, Robertson says, "would not set out on an expedition so arduous, and of

which one great object was to extend the knowledge of the Catholic faith, without imploring publicly the guidance and protection of Heaven. With this view he, together with all the persons under his command, marched in solemn procession to the monastery of Rabida. After confessing their sins and obtaining absolution, they received the Holy Sacrament from the hands of the guardian, who joined his prayers to theirs for the success of an enterprise which he had so zealously patronized." \* The convent chapel was dedicated to Our Lady. When he was on the point of retiring from Spain, Columbus went, as we have seen, to La Rabida on purpose to take his son Diego from the care of Father Juan Perez and place him with Fernando at Cordova. This intention had been interrupted by the prompt action of Father Perez when he wrote to Isabella. Now that he was again on the point of leaving Spain, he resumed his interrupted design, and sent Diego under convoy to Cordova,† having himself called there on his way from Santa Fé. Probably it was then that his wife's nephew,

\* "History of America," bk. ii.

† Martin Sanchez, a priest, and Rodriguez Cabezudo were commissioned to see Diego safe to Cordova to the care of Doña Beatrix, not, as Irving (bk. ii. c. ix.) supposes, to superintend at Moguer his further education, in the special view of fitting him for presentation at court. Diego would certainly never have been removed from the good care of Father Juan at La Rabida to place him with a worthy ecclesiastic at Moguer, whether the object had been to improve his mind or to train him for life at the court.

Diego de Araña, made up his mind to undertake the voyage in his company. Having provided for his son's well-being in his absence, Columbus shut himself up in his "cell" to wait for a good east wind. He had previously spent the chief part of his time in the monastery, leaving the lesser details of arrangement to the Pinzons, who were in every way competent to undertake the direction, and who had too large a stake in the enterprise to be suspected of negligence. Everything was ready, the baggage on board, and the signal flag flying. No one was allowed to sleep ashore except the admiral himself, and he was to be summoned as soon as the fair breeze should begin to blow. He was at this period a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, and it is probable that he had only a short time previously been enrolled. He attended choir. His favorite book was the Gospel of St. John. We may well imagine that his own meditations would have had at such a time a tinge of sublimity.

Robertson places the general communion of the ships' companies on the day before the departure. This is apparently incorrect, but in any case Columbus had not long to wait. Oviedo affirms that he received communion on the very day on which he went to sea. He must have heard a very early Mass, for it was at three o'clock in the morning of the 3d of August that he was awakened by the joyful sound of the rust-

ling trees. Father Perez walked with him in the early morning into Palos, and a boat put off from the *Santa Maria* to receive him. The little town was soon astir with many breaking hearts. The parting of emigrants is sorrowful enough, but the parting at Palos before the first voyage into that old mysterious sea must have been to mothers and sisters still more full of anxious fear. Columbus strained the good Franciscan Father to his breast and was soon on board. The royal ensign of the fleet, bearing the image of Christ crucified, replaced the signal flag. The other vessels carried less elaborate ensigns, on which was a green cross between the initials of the sovereigns. The 3d of August fell upon a Friday, and to Columbus Friday was ever a day of blessing. On Friday he left Palos, on Friday he returned to Palos, on Friday he landed in the New World. The luckiest voyage ever made began on Friday. A superstitious dread of the day of redemption beseems better the enemies than the friends of the Cross of Christ.

Half an hour before sunrise Columbus gave the order to spread the sails in the name of Jesus,\* and the three vessels dropped down the river and were soon out of sight of the people of Palos; but when they emerged from the mouth of the Odiel,

\*“Y en el nombre de Jesus mando de splegar las velas” (Oviedo y Valdez, “La Historia natural y general de las Indias,” l. ii. c. v. fol. 6).

they were visible from La Rabida for nearly three hours, and Father Juan then, if ever, must have been gazing out to sea from his observatory. The venerable Las Casas was a man whose sanctity was of a very practical kind. He had not a poetical temperament like Columbus, and could not in the least appreciate flights of fancy ; so, under the idea that he was doing good service, instead of multiplying copies of the journal of Columbus and securing the safe transmission of an original work of incalculable value, he detached the hard facts from the accompanying commentary, and a sort of log-book is the result. Hard facts to him were precious stones, and comments even by Columbus were tinsel setting. The journal has perished and only the compendium remains. The preamble of the journal, however, is extant,\* and from it may be guessed what a treasure has been lost. It begins, "*In Nomine Domini Jesu Christi.*" The expedition is described as a mission from the Catholic sovereigns to the Grand Khan, principally to devise the means of converting the nations of the far East.† He goes on to say : " I intend to write during this voyage very punctually from day to day all that I

\* Irving, bk. iii. c. i.

† It is not wonderful that John the Second of Portugal, considering that all infidel countries eastward from Cape Bojador had been assigned by Pope Martin the Fifth to the crown of Portugal, regarded the discoveries of Columbus as touching upon his property. East and West, on a spherical world, are relative terms and liable to be misunderstood.



may do and see and experience, as will hereafter be seen. Also, my sovereign princes, besides describing each night all that has occurred in the day, and in the day the navigation of the night, I propose to make a chart; . . . and upon the whole it will be essential that I should forget sleep and attend closely to the navigation to accomplish these things, which will be a great labor." Nature will have her revenge, and even Columbus had to yield to sleep, but he did not do so with impunity.

The great work was fairly begun. The expedition was afloat, and that was saying much. So thought Columbus, but he also thought that very little was needed even then to ruin everything. If his men refused to sail forward, he would be at any time helpless. In many breasts the old reluctance had been only smothered, not properly quenched, and the smouldering fire of disaffection might burst into flames with a slight provocation. The *Pinta* on Monday ran up a signal of distress. The rudder was disabled. The same thing had occurred before in the course of the preparations, and it was clearly a ruse of the owners, who were on board, to force a return. They were ready to sacrifice a part to save the whole. Martin Alonzo Pinzon patched up the rudder temporarily, and Columbus steered for the Canaries. He tried for three weeks to pick up another vessel, but, failing, had to content himself with refit-



ting the *Pinta*. The *Niña* was fresh rigged with square-sails. Danger followed danger. Three Portuguese caravels were in waiting at Ferro to bar further progress, and a vexatious calm set in, as if to give the crew time to contemplate an eruption of Teneriffe, which could only add to their agitation. The wind rose, and they soon left behind the Portuguese and the last trace of land. The hearts of the sailors sank within them. The helmsmen almost involuntarily kept shifting the course. It seemed too terrible to turn their backs directly upon Europe. Columbus did not dare to let them know the distance they had traversed, and he kept two reckonings, one correct and the other ostensible. The sequel showed the worldly wisdom of this contrivance. He tried also to keep the variation of the magnet from the observation of the pilots, for he knew they would be frightened by it; but he could not keep it from them long. When the needle, pattern of fidelity, was no longer true to its pole, could they themselves be chidden for faltering in their resolution? The change of constellations helped to alarm them. All things were strange—a new earth and a new sky and new laws of nature. Columbus seemed to know no fear,\* or only to fear the fears of his companions. A magnificent meteor filled

\* He says of himself in a letter to Alexander the Sixth in 1502: "La cual razon me descansa y hace que yo non tema peligros," etc. (Docum. diplom., n. 145).

him with admiration, them with terror. His trust was not in compass or constellations, but in the guiding hand of God and in a Star of the Sea shining from a higher heaven than eyes of the body could reach. The standard of the Cross was floating overhead to disconcert the spirits of darkness and to rectify all malign influences of the elements, and every evening the *Ave Maris Stella* sanctified those solitudes where never from creation's dawn the voice of man had sounded until then—

“ They were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.”

The admiral shut himself up at stated times every day, to make his meditation and recite his office, like a Franciscan. He was pretty nearly all the remainder of the day and night at his station on the poop, keeping watch. The weather was charming, the trade-wind steady, and the progress rapid. The hearts of the wanderers sank within them. The fair wind began to be the chief of all their ocean terrors. They were driving along before the breeze gaily to their doom; for if the wind blew always from the east, they could never sail back. Already, towards the end of September, the crews were ripe for mutiny. Argument had been exhausted; authority was little regarded. No effort was made to disguise the general discontent. Columbus held on his course. The wind shifted to the west, to the im-

mense relief of all. Next day a calm ensued. The sea was thick with weeds, and again fancy was busy. They had arrived at the place of their doom. There they were to lie on the stagnant water, to wait for a cruel death. The surface did not long remain smooth; great billows rose and fell, and the phantom of perpetual stagnation vanished, as the phantom of perpetual east wind had done. On the 25th of September, the *Pinta* being close to the *Santa Maria*, Martin Alonzo Pinzon, deceived by a cloud upon the horizon, cried out, "Land! I claim the prize." All his crew were shouting with joy; the men of the *Niña* ran up the rigging for a better view, and confirmed the announcement. Columbus fell on his knees and intoned the "Gloria in Excelsis." When the mistake was discovered, the revulsion of feeling was terrible. Signs of land for the next few days kept hope from absolutely dying; but the distance which severed them from the world of human beings, ostensibly 580 leagues, really 707 leagues, seemed to close against them all chances of return. They left the signs of land behind them, and began to think that they had passed some islands.

Columbus himself shared the surmise, but he held obstinately on his course to the west, in spite of remonstrances and murmurs, and even of threats. The Pinzons felt their power, but, though they treated Columbus with little consi-

deration, they refrained from giving direct encouragement to any overt act of insubordination. Fresh flights of birds seemed to indicate land more to the south, and, as Martin Alonzo Pinzon had already strongly urged a more southerly course, Columbus, on the 7th October, veered to west-southwest. On the 10th October the suppressed mutiny broke out. Signs of land were declared delusive; the voyage, it was said, was interminable. It seems certain from the history of Fernando, and the thing is in itself probable, that some of the mutineers were ready to proceed to all extremities, and that they had resolved to throw the refractory admiral overboard in the darkness, accounting as best they might for his disappearance, if he finally refused to sail back. It seems, on the other hand, that there is very slight foundation for the well-known story of the capitulation, by which Columbus bound himself to turn back if land was not sighted within three days. Las Casas, Fernando, Bernaldez (better known as the Curate of Los Palacios) do not mention it. It comes from Oviedo, who credulously accepted many statements injurious to Columbus upon the worst possible testimony—namely, that of a sailor attached to the Pinzon interest. After Martin Alonzo's untimely death, his children certainly spared no pains to blacken the name of Columbus. This particular misstatement, which even Oviedo gives in a hesitating

tone, is quite worth contradicting, for it detracts much from the heroism of the conduct of Columbus in what was, perhaps, the most trying moment of all his life.

He was at last deserted by every soul on the three ships. Martin Alonzo Pinzon had at length lost heart, and the three brothers joined the insurgent crews, and added their angry demand to the fierce clamors for return. A moment's hesitation then would have put Columbus at their mercy. He stood his ground, and by the moral grandeur of his simple faith calmed the fierce storm of passion raging round. There is something bordering on the marvellous in the power which he suddenly exerted. In the merely natural order, a calm, determined refusal is the wisest answer to an insolent demand; but when one hundred and twenty exasperated men, under the influence of personal fear, in the strong instinct of self-preservation, are clamoring, as they imagine, for their own lives, to answer their demand with a cool *non possumus* is about as brave as to take one's stand in a jungle unarmed to stare a tiger out of countenance; and if the tiger, in the act of springing, yields to the controlling force of the human eye, and turns aside into the thicket, it is scarcely less wonderful than the meek submission of those angry men. Columbus, to their furious demand to steer them whence they came, quietly forbade all protestation

or entreaty, telling them in so many words that remonstrance was useless, that he had started for the Indies, and go there he would by the help of our Lord. From that moment things grew brighter. Columbus had been tried like gold in the furnace, and he was not found wanting. "The Eternal God had given him strength." \* Unmistakable signs of very near land dispelled all mutinous thoughts; and eager hope awoke in every breast. The hymn of Our Lady was never intermitted, and on the evening after the outbreak, at the end of the prayers, Columbus delivered a solemn discourse, bidding his hearers thank our Lord, who, in his mercy, had conducted them safely across the "Mare Tenebrosum," and advising them for greater security to slacken sail in the darkness, and (but they did not need the telling) to keep a vigilant look-out all night. He then retired till ten o'clock.

About that time Columbus came on deck, and he immediately fancied he discerned a light moving in front. He would not trust his eyes, and called his commissary of marine, Rodrigo Sanchez, who confirmed the truth of the apparition. Before any further corroboration could be obtained, the light had disappeared. To Columbus

\* "Los cuales todos á una voz estaban determinados de volver y alzarse haciendo contra él protestaciones, y el eterno Dios le dió esfuerzo y valor contra todos" (Jueves, 14 de hebrero).

it was a sure proof of inhabited land. After midnight they proceeded cautiously, the *Pinta* being considerably in advance. Every eye was straining through the gloom, every heart throbbing. What must have been the feelings of the great and good man whose mind had schemed, whose single will had compassed, so sublime a deed! Before him, wrapped in darkness, lay a world waiting discovery by the light of morning. His name was now a heritage of fame. No history of mankind could pass him by unnoticed. The memory of that night would live to the end of time. But it may be that all the while he was thanking Our Lady, ascribing all success to her, and acknowledging himself only an instrument in the hands of Providence, as he repeated to himself, perhaps, the words, "Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini tuo da gloriam." At two A.M., by the clock on the *Santa Maria*, a flash came from the *Pinta*, followed by a loud report—the signal gun. It was no false alarm this time. Juan Rodriguez Bermejo, a sailor on the *Pinta*, had sighted land. Columbus, at the sound of the gun, fell on his knees and chanted the "Te Deum," his men responding with full hearts. Then they went wild with joy. The admiral ordered the sails to be furled, and the ships to be put in a state of defence, for it was impossible to say what the next daylight might reveal. His officers came crowding round to offer their congratulations, and now,



at last, their genuine reverence. They no longer blamed his obstinacy or spoke of his infatuation.

It was Friday, the 12th of October, 1492. As the day broke, the Spaniards saw before them a beautiful island covered with verdure. The waters of a lake shone through the trees, which everywhere shut in the shore. At the sight of the white-winged monsters approaching from the sea, the natives fled to the woods and watched from their leafy covert the strange visitors, wondering what would happen. Did they come from the skies or from some wicked world? Did they bring a blessing or a curse? The poor Indians could not answer. Can we? Columbus intended to bear them good tidings; Rome intended to send them rich blessings; but avarice and lust marred the fair work, and turned a message of peace into a cruel conquest, and made what might have been made an earthly paradise a land of hideous slavery. Baptized and instructed, those gentle islanders would have made good Christians.\* As it was, they were goaded into resistance, and taught to shrink from the thought

\* So thought Columbus: "Martes 6 de Noviembre. Tengo por dicho, serenísimos Príncipes, que sabiendo la lengua dispuesta suya personas devotas religiosas, que luego todos se tornarían Cristianos; y así espero en nuestro Señor que vuestras Altezas se determinarían á ello con mucha diligencia para tornar á la Iglesia tan grandes pueblos, y los convertirán, así como han destruido aquellos que no quisieron confesar el Padre, y el Hijo, y el Espíritu Santo" (Journal of Columbus, abridged by Las Casas).



of going after death to the "white man's heaven." The tears of the Indians have been awfully avenged. Spain and Portugal have been cursed for their cruelty; but the future was mercifully veiled on the day of which we speak.

The ships had been brought to anchor. The lord-admiral, in his scarlet robe of state, pushed off in his boat, bearing in his own hands the royal ensign, and accompanied by the captains of the *Pinta* and the *Niña* in their own boats, and carrying their flags. Springing to shore, Columbus sank upon his knees and kissed the ground three times, shedding tears of joy. All with him followed his example.\* Then, planting the standard of the Crucified, he took solemn possession of the island in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for the crown of Castile under the name of San Salvador.† He ordered also a large wooden cross to be set up. The curiosity of the natives soon got the better of their fears, and they came from their hiding-places to adore the Spaniards, whose splendid dress and glittering armor on closer inspection proved that they came from heaven. They were especially attracted to Columbus, who treated them with great kindness, and made many enquiries by signs, naturally enough, as

\* "Inginocchiati baciaron la terra tre volte piangendo di allegrezza. Ramusio. Delle navigationi e viaggi raccolte" (vol. iii. fol. 1).

† The Indian name was Guanahanè; the English name is Cat Island.

Irving suggests, interpreting their responsive signs by reference to his foregone conclusions. He called them Indians because he thought that their island was in the region of the East Indies. He understood them to speak of gold to be found in abundance to the south; there, then, was the Island of Cipango. He understood them to speak of a great king, who was served in vessels of gold; it must be the Great Khan. The island was soon explored. Among its natural advantages is noticed "stone for building churches." The poor natives in all parts of it received the strangers with the most unsuspecting hospitality. Seven of them were easily induced to go with Columbus, and he seems to have distributed them among the three vessels. One of them deserted, but others were added from Cuba and St. Domingo. He designed to present them to their Catholic majesties to have them instructed in the faith, and then to send them back to their country to help forward the work of conversion.

When he sailed away from San Salvador the admiral at once found himself in an archipelago, pleasantly embarrassed by the multitude of islands offered to his choice. He steered for the largest, which he named Santa Maria de la Concepcion. Another island he named Fernandina, another Isabella. Everywhere he treated the natives with studious kindness, repressing the least attempt at harshness on the part of his men, and

he succeeded in inspiring complete confidence. The faith was his first thought, but gold was the second. In every place he touched he enquired where gold was to be found ; he had a keen eye to every little ornament of gold ; he candidly announced that he should only stop where there was a prospect of collecting gold ; and he adds that, with the help of our Lord, he felt sure of success in his search for gold. It is a curious manifestation of character. Love of gold is not one of the usual signs of sanctity. Columbus wanted gold for two great reasons : first, to enhance the importance of the discoveries, for all his loftiest dreams depended for their realization, as he in his ignorance of the future fondly thought, upon causing a stream of European enterprise to flow into the dominions of the Great Khan ; secondly, to amass treasure for the second great object of his life—the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre\* ; an

\* Columbus in his will says : “. . . As at the time that I undertook to set out upon the discoveries of the Indies, it was with the intention of supplicating the king and queen our lords that whatever moneys should be derived from the said Indies should be invested in the conquest of Jerusalem, and, as I did so supplicate them, if they do this it will be well ; if not, at all events the said Diego, or such person as may succeed him in this trust, to collect together all the money he can, and accompany the king our lord, should he go to the conquest of Jerusalem, or else go there himself with all the force he can command. . . .” Columbus tells us in his journal, under date the 26th of December, 1492, that he had in a private audience communicated to the sovereigns his designs upon Jerusalem, and that they seemed amused and signified that even without his Indian revenues they were well disposed to do what they could in such a cause. He at least was in tremendous earnest. We have in this deeply-cherished

object early contemplated and never abandoned. From Isabella Columbus stood across to Cuba, convinced that it must be the Island of Cipango. Martin Alonzo Pinzon succeeded in persuading him that it was the mainland of Asia. If it was Asia, then the Grand Khan was accessible. He understood the Indians to speak of a great king, four days' journey distant, and he sent off two ambassadors, one of whom was Luiz de Torres, whose knowledge of Arabic might help him with the Great Khan or some of his vassal sovereigns. Two Indian interpreters made up the party. They only found a village of fifty huts, but the natives everywhere greeted them kindly.\* Deceived by mistaken interpretations, he deserted his northwest course, which would soon have proved Cuba to be an island, and, still dreaming of gold, coasted in the opposite direction. He named the beautiful archipelago near Puerto del Principe, at the east of Cuba, "Sea of our Lady." As he went along he erected crosses and scatter-

project the key to his lofty demands of viceregal dignity and a tenth of all the profits—an explanation of his eager search for gold. All his designs had a princely character. He wanted to be able to fit out an expedition of fifty thousand men to fight the infidel on his own account, in case Ferdinand should look coldly on the project. His resolution was already formed when he was treating with King John of Portugal, and there can be no doubt that the idea had been suggested by his conflicts with the Mussulmans on the Mediterranean, and it was quite in the spirit of those times.

\* They witnessed on their return journey a curious practice since known as "smoking."

ed pious names, very few of which have come down to our times.

As Columbus was finishing the coasting of the isle of Cuba, the *Pinta* cruelly deserted him. Martin Alonzo tried to make out afterwards that the separation was accidental, but there is no doubt that he yielded to temptation, and went away to find gold for himself. With a part of his profits he bribed his crew to give a false account. He also made slaves of some of the natives, intending to sell them ; but Columbus exerted his authority, and forced him, not without high words passing between them, to send them home with presents. Soon after the disappearance of the *Pinta*, his own ship, whilst he was asleep, was wrecked beyond reconstruction on the coast of Hispaniola, now called St. Domingo, or Hayti, whither he passed from Cuba. His situation was now extremely critical. One caravel, the *Niña*, not of strong build, was all that remained. Martin Alonzo had heard of the shipwreck from the natives, but, instead of hastening to the aid of his commander, continued to push his private traffic, which he found very lucrative. Some of the Spaniards, Diego de Araña among them, at their own request, were left in Hispaniola, in number thirty-eight, and a rude fortress, sufficient to protect them from the warlike Caribs of Porto Rico, the terror of the gentler tribes, was formed from the wreck of the *Santa Maria*. The unhappy

little colony was christened La Navidad. Columbus at parting gave them much admirable counsel, which they in their folly forgot. The leavetaking was a sore trial both to those who went and to those who stayed, although they did not know that it was final. It was not till some days after leaving Navidad that Columbus fell in with the truant Pinzon. Though he prudently suppressed the signs of his just indignation, he could feel no further confidence in the man who might at any time, under renewed temptation, repeat a perfidy which he did not seem to regret. That one disloyal act had ruined a campaign. The only safe course now was to make the best way back to Spain, and leave further discoveries for future expeditions. The resolve was a painful one, but it was more important to secure the discoveries already made than to augment them. For some days the vessels coasted eastward, and the first blood was spilt just before leaving Hispaniola. The Indians who belonged to the warlike tribe of Ciguayans were the aggressors, but the encounter caused much grief to Columbus.

New dangers were at hand. On the voyage home, which was finally determined about the 20th of January, 1493, the sea was as tempestuous as it had before been tranquil. Martin Alonzo Pinzon, this time most unwillingly, was separated by stress of weather, and Columbus feared that the *Pinta* had gone down. The *Niña*, on which all

his hopes depended, was utterly unfit to do battle with the angry billows of the Atlantic, and Columbus thought it could never live through so wild a storm. His agony of mind was very great: "I could have supported this evil fortune with less grief had my person alone been in jeopardy, since I am a debtor for my life to the Supreme Creator, and have at other times been within a step of death. But it was a cause of infinite sorrow and trouble to think that after having been illuminated from on high with faith and certainty to undertake this enterprise, after having victoriously achieved it, and when on the point of convincing my opponents and securing to your highnesses great glory and vast increase of dominions, it should please the Divine Majesty to defeat all by my death." \* He adds that he deeply felt for those for whose death he was responsible. Many vows were made to Our Blessed Lady to perform penitential pilgrimages, and the *Niña* weathered one storm after another. The reception of the tempest-tossed Spaniards in St. Mary's of the Azores by the Christian Portuguese was in strange contrast to the generous conduct of the poor "savages" of Hispaniola when the *Santa Maria* was wrecked on their coast. The Portuguese governor, alleging royal orders, sought to detain them as his prisoners; but though he spoke

\* Irving, bk. v. c. ii.



with lofty contempt of Ferdinand and Isabella, the cringing sycophant found it convenient to allow his guests to depart. The pitiless storm broke upon them again, and pursued the little half-decked caravel with ever-increasing fury, till, kept afloat by a sort of miracle, it staggered into harbor at the mouth of the Tagus. Columbus did not like the situation, but no choice was given. He sent a message immediately to the Spanish sovereigns, and another to the King of Portugal. Crowds came to look at him and his Indians. He was treated from the first with marked respect. The king invited him to court, and though he must have been tortured by remorse when he thought of all that he had allowed to slip from his grasp, he did not permit Columbus to feel any effects of his displeasure, but congratulated him kindly, and gave him many marks of his esteem. He offered to escort him overland to Spain, but the storm had now passed, and Columbus preferred to continue the voyage. He ran into Palos on the 15th of March, 1493. Great was the excitement in the little town. The inhabitants had been gradually settling down into sombre resignation, and scarcely dared to think of the terrible fate to which so many who were dear to them had been consigned; and now when they saw their own little caravel the *Niña* sailing up the Odiel they were almost as much taken by surprise as the poor Indians of San Salvador had



been. The bells were ringing, and all Palos came to the river-side to welcome back friends and relatives, as if they had risen from the dead, and to hear the tale of wonder.

By a strange accident, a few hours later, before the first burst of enthusiastic welcome had subsided, while the bells were still ringing to tell the country round, and the admiral was receiving fresh felicitations every moment, the *Pinta*, well known in Palos, stood up the river and cast anchor by the side of the *Niña*. Martin Alonzo was not on board. The *Pinta* had been driven by the gale into the Bay of Biscay, and from Bayonne Pinzon had despatched a letter to the Spanish sovereigns, arrogating to himself all the merit of the discoveries, for he made quite sure that the poor little *Niña* had perished in the storm. His own crew would not contradict his statement, he thought, for their interests were identified with his, and dead men tell no tales. The *Niña*, lying off Palos, was hidden by the bend in the river, and it was only at the last moment, when he was almost in the act of landing, that Martin Alonzo Pinzon saw the *Niña* riding at anchor with the admiral's flag at the masthead. He had come to reap a harvest of glory in his native place, while he waited for the royal answer summoning him to court. Never was applicant for royal favor so crestfallen since Aman made over his honors to Mardocheus and was

hanged in his stead. The poor man crept over the side of his vessel, made off in his boat as fast as he could, and kept out of his sight till Columbus left Palos. Then he made his way silently home, to die very soon of a broken heart. Irving's appreciation of his character is certainly the right one. It was not fear of any punishment which Columbus might inflict, but a selfaccusing conscience which made him shrink from public notice. He had enough greatness of soul to feel the full shame of his own defection.

The *Pinta* and *Niña* had between them brought back every man belonging to Palos who had joined the enterprise. Of the thirty-eight who stayed at Navidad, not one was from Palos. Only one man, an Indian, had died on the voyage. The general exultation was not sullied, as the joy of victory invariably is, by private grief.

Not all the congratulations that pressed in upon him, or all the anticipations of higher glory in a wider sphere, could make the faithful servant of Mary forget the vows pronounced in the hour of his deep distress. One of these was to go with all his men of the *Niña* in procession, in penitential garb, to the nearest shrine of Our Lady, after landing. He had made the attempt to keep the vow when he landed in the Azores, but had been prevented by the hostile interference of the Portuguese governor. He then reserved its fulfilment for the final landing, and so it happened that the

procession marched to the Convent of La Rabida, and it fell to good Father Juan Perez de Marchena to say the Mass of Thanksgiving. The men were then permitted to rejoin their families, and each one must have been at once a hero on his own account, the centre of a circle of admiring friends who hung with rapt attention on his words as he delivered his oracular account of the cruise. Columbus naturally fell back upon La Rabida. His "family" lived there, for he was a son of St. Francis. The pious daydreams of Father Perez had found indeed their fulfilment, and there really were in the far West nations to be evangelized. The cross had already been planted there, but that was only the beginning of the beginning. It was not enough to find a new world. Grave responsibilities devolved upon the finder. Columbus could now speak and be listened to. Kings and popes would value his advice, perhaps shape their conduct upon it. The destinies of millions of immortal souls were delivered to his keeping. In that convent once already a more important junta had been held than that of Salamanca, and now the monk and the admiral laid their heads together again to devise great things. Columbus in his cell supplemented by a full narrative the brief despatch sent from the Tagus, and counselled Isabella to come to terms with the Holy See, suggesting a line of demarcation between the East, which be-

longed to Portugal, and the West, which ought to belong to Spain. It is easy to sneer at the "sage device" \* of the Pope. "It seems never to have occurred to the pontiff," says Washington Irving, "that by pushing their opposite careers of discovery they might some day or other come again in collision and renew the question of territorial right at the antipodes."†

If it had occurred to the Pope, he might have also had some light from heaven to know that before the collision of Spaniards rounding the world to the west and Portuguese to the east took place at the antipodes, England might have something to say to lines of demarcation. It was the part of wisdom to deal with the difficulty as it presented itself, and seldom has a vast international problem been so trenchantly solved.‡

\* Bk. v. c. ix.

† Bk. v. c. viii.

‡ Columbus proposed and Pope Alexander the Sixth (of unhappy memory) immediately adopted as the Line of Demarcation between the future dominions of the two great maritime powers a meridian drawn one hundred leagues to the west of the Azores and Cape de Verde Islands, measured from a point half way between the two groups. The Bull of the 4th of May, 1493, enacts that on the said line being drawn, the Spaniards shall be entitled to all the land to the west and south: *Omnes insulas et terras firmas inventas et inveniendas, detectas et degendas, versus occidentem et meridiem, fabricando et constituendo unam lineam a Polo Arctico, scilicet septentrione, ad Polum Antarcticum, scilicet meridiem.* The words "to the south" are certainly a curious addition, but Prescott puts his own interpretation upon the sentence when he says, very unnecessarily, "A point south of the meridian is something new in geometry" ("Ferdinand and Isabella," vol. ii. part i. c. vii.), for the actual words are not "south of the meridian." If accuracy is intended, a certain number of leagues (an absolute term), measured westward, would represent a different number of

The penitential procession was only one of many vows which had been made in that long series of terrible storms. Out of four other vows proposed to the acceptance of all on board the *Niña*, three had by lot fallen to Columbus himself.\* They involved a journey to Santa Maria de Guadalupe, where he promised the monks to call one of his islands after their convent, another to Santa Clara at Moguer, where he spent the night before the Blessed Sacrament, and a third to Santa Maria de la Ceuta in Huelva.

*degrees* (a variable term) according to the latitude along which they were counted, and thus the explicit mention of the meridian involves the implicit allusion to the line of latitude, and the Pope no doubt meant to speak of land lying westward from the meridian and southward from the mean latitude of the Azores and Cape de Verde Islands. The real difficulty of the passage is to explain why the grant was restricted to the south. Perhaps it was because Columbus was convinced that all the *west and north* belonged to the Grand Khan; perhaps it was because the Pope had a prophetic glimpse of Pilgrim Fathers and United States. Whatever conclusion may be thence deduced, it is a fact which has not been noticed before, and yet deserves notice, that the Papal Line of Demarcation is the only meridian that encounters no land between the Arctic and Antarctic circles. If it was not a providential arrangement, it was a very remarkable guess. The Portuguese complained that they had not enough sea-room for prosecuting their voyages *east and south*, and Spain, thinking that the exact position of an imaginary line drawn at haphazard on the ocean between the two continents was not worth fighting about, instead of supporting the Pope, whom no representations could induce to recede from the assigned hundred leagues, kindly of her own accord came into the view of Portugal, and agreed at Tordesillas, on the 7th of June, 1494, to push back the meridian to the distance of three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape de Verde Islands. Spain by this self-denying ordinance calmly and quite unintentionally ceded Brazil to Portugal.

\*There was something singular in the recurrence of this circumstance. Irving, "Life of Columbus," bk. v. c. iv.

Then he received Holy Communion, after eight months' privation. He remained a few days with Father Perez, and then went to Seville, to wait for the answer of the king and queen. It came, addressed "To Don Christopher Columbus, our Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and Governor of the Islands discovered in the Indies." He was invited to proceed as soon as possible to Barcelona. The journey was a triumphal procession all the way. He had summoned his sailors from Palos to share the honors, and as by that time all the country had heard of the grand discovery, crowds flocked along the route to tender their respect to the great man as he passed. The Indians whom he carried with him were objects of special interest, and a monster iguana, harmless enough even when alive, but looking very diabolical even when stuffed, was an object of mingled wonder and fear.

The enthusiasm of the people was a suggestion to the court, and a reception in the grandest style of grandiose Spanish ceremonial was carefully prepared. As he approached the town he was met by a noble escort of young cavaliers and a vast surging throng of citizens. He was himself on horseback, and seemed by his stately bearing and commanding presence fit to be the central figure of this almost Roman triumph. At the palace the great hall of audience had been thrown open. A seat splendidly adorned was placed

close in front of the two royal thrones, which surpassed their usual magnificence. The sovereigns were already seated, waiting for Columbus. When he approached they rose to greet him. In vain he tried to kneel and kiss their hands. Not till he was seated would they resume their seats. Then they demanded his narrative, and with charming modesty and self-possession he told them of their new dominions. We do not possess the words of his discourse, but when he finished the king and queen, with all the vast multitude present, fell upon their knees and thanked God for the mighty deeds of Christopher Columbus.







### CHAPTER III.

NONE spoke more loudly the praises of the man whom the court and the nation agreed to honor than those who had mocked him in his distress, when a kind word would have reached his heart and been remembered. Columbus knew the value of their protestations of good will. The Dominican Father, Diego de Deza, who had pleaded his cause at Salamanca, shared with Father Juan Perez his undying gratitude; but he was well assured that the base spirits who, after trying to crush him in his poverty, now came to flatter him in his prosperity would desert him again if he ever needed their assistance. His enemies hitherto had done nothing worse than waste his time and health and strength, and delay his work. It was now to be their part to ruin his benevolent schemes, to shorten his life, and injure his renown.

The active vigilance and continual anxiety of eight eventful months must have made repose almost a necessity. There was indeed no time to lose, for wasted years had made all that might yet remain of life very precious. But it seems



that Columbus did actually contemplate a flying visit to Rome, to tell with his own lips the story of his voyage to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to whom, in the truthful judgment of those days, the discovery of new races of men was a matter of more vital interest and grave concern than even to Ferdinand and Isabella, or to John the Second. A journey from Rome to Genoa to see old Domenico, who was yet alive, would have been in the natural course of things. If any such design had been formed, it had to be set aside, for the threatening attitude of Portugal made even a short delay unwise. King John the Second (although, in spite of wicked advice, he had not molested Columbus when he had him in his power) was fully determined to secure for himself some portion of the Western world; and it seemed likely, by the reports which reached the court of Spain, that he would solve the diplomatic difficulty by fitting out an expedition without further ceremony. Columbus was ordered to push the preparations for a second voyage. Instead of visiting his aged father, he sent an affectionate message, begging at the same time that his brother James might be allowed to join him in Spain. The young man accordingly passed straight from the wool-comber's shop to the Spanish court, and became Don Diego Colon. His first public act was to stand godfather to one of the Indians, who received his name. King Ferdinand, Prince

Juan, and the first noblemen of Spain were his associates in this pious work.

The sovereigns issued their instructions, and placed the fitting out of the fleet and the management of Indian affairs under the superintendence of Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, Archdeacon of Seville, who held the administration for thirty years. The choice was unfortunate. Francis Pine-lo was made treasurer, and Juan de Soria comptroller. The admiral was directed to establish a similar office in Hispaniola. Twelve priests were chosen to accompany the expedition, under the direction of the Benedictine Father Boil.

The appointment of this worldly-minded monk had no blessing of Heaven upon it, and, as it now seems, no authorization from Rome. It was apparently a culpable error on the part of Ferdinand, the true history of which never came to light till 1851.\* The sterility of these first missionaries to the New World is no longer surprising. Father Bernard Boil, the Benedictine, who went with Columbus on his second voyage, was well known at the court of Aragon, and highly esteemed for skilful management of business. Ferdinand sent his name to Rome, praying that the spiritual interests of the expedition might be confided to his care. But the Holy Father knew that Columbus was deeply attached to the

\* Roselly de Lorgues, "*Christophe Colomb*," t. i. p. 509.

Franciscans ; so, setting aside the king's nominee, he appointed, it seems, a Franciscan Father of the same name.\* When the bull arrived, bearing the address, *Dilecto filio Bernardo Boyl fratri ordinis minorum, Vicario dicti ordinis in Hispaniarum regnis*, Ferdinand seems to have thought that the Holy Father had made a mistake, and that although Father Bernard Boyl was styled a friar minor, he must surely be that Bernard Boil for whom solemn application had been made. He did not feel quite certain about his interpretation, but it would never do to delay the departure of the fleet till a rectification could be procured from Rome. He therefore persuaded himself that he could with safe conscience take the benefit of the doubt, for after all he was doing very little violence to the document by changing the title of the monk and one letter of his name, and it could not matter much in point of fact, he thought, whether one saintly order or another had to provide a vicar-apostolic. Having thus forced his conscience to agree with his inclination, he suppressed the bull, for it was not impossible that theologians might attach more value to what the Pope had actually said than to what the king thought the Pope had intended to say.

Father Boil, the Benedictine, received due

\* The Benedictine Father's name is generally given as Boil, but at the court it was written Buil. The Franciscan Father's name was written Boyl.

notice of the arrival of the bull confirming the king's nomination, but the document itself was retained by the king, for fear, it was alleged, of exposing it to unnecessary risk. Later it vanished altogether, and is not to be found in the collection of diplomatic papers published by the Spanish Government. The original has been faithfully preserved in the archives of the Vatican.\*

The fleet was made up of seventeen vessels—three large carracks and fourteen caravels. Great activity was displayed in furnishing, provisioning, and arming the ships, and in selecting suitable crews from the crowd of volunteers of all conditions who pressed forward to demand admission. Columbus stayed in Barcelona till the 28th of May, receiving continual proofs of the complete confidence which Isabella placed in his judgment; and the solemn instructions delivered to him by the sovereigns to guide him in his government of the colonies were really nothing but his own suggestions adopted, without an amendment or an addition, and ratified by royal authority. He was named Captain-General of the Fleet of the Indies, and received authority for the direct appointment

\* It may have been that the similarity of the names was the original cause of the error, though not in the manner which Ferdinand supposed. Alexander the Sixth might have been willing to appear to make a mistake in his appointment of the friar minor, for this would save him from the unpleasantness of directly rejecting the king's nominee.

of all the officers of the new Government.\* The royal seal was committed to him to be used at his discretion, and the articles agreed upon at Santa Fé were solemnly confirmed. The queen showed great solicitude for all that concerned his personal comfort, and required that the greatest deference should be paid to all his wishes. She provided generously for his expenses: wherever he went he was to have free lodging for himself and five servants, and free transport for his baggage. Fonseca and Soria thought the queen was going a little too far, and they quietly disobeyed her injunctions, treating some of the admiral's demands with contempt. They drew down upon themselves a severe reprimand, which they never forgave. Fonseca had ample opportunity to make Columbus feel the full weight of his vengeance.†

\* When, acting upon this provision, he made his brother Bartholomew Lieutenant-Governor, not because he was his brother, but because he was the only man fit for the office, Ferdinand was much displeased that so high a dignity had been conferred without reference to the crown (Irving, bk. viii. c. i. and c. ix.)

† This man seems to have deserved the character given to him by Irving: "He must undoubtedly have possessed talents for business, to ensure him such perpetuity of office; but he was malignant and vindictive, and in the gratification of his private resentments not only heaped wrongs and sorrows upon the most illustrious of the early discoverers, but frequently impeded the progress of their enterprises, to the great detriment of the crown. This he was enabled to do privately and securely by his official situation. His perfidious conduct is repeatedly alluded to, but in guarded terms, by contemporary writers of weight and credit, such as the curate of Los Palacios and the Bishop Las Casas; but they evidently were fearful of expressing the fulness of their feelings. Subsequent Spanish historians, always more or less controlled by ecclesiastical supervision, have likewise dealt too

During the admiral's stay in Barcelona the prize for the first sight of land was adjudged to him, because he had descried the moving light upon the shore. It is said that Juan Bermejo, the sailor on the *Pinta* who first descried the coast line, was so vexed at this decision that he went over to Africa and turned Mohammedan; but the claim of Columbus seems to have been a fair subject of discussion, and if the commissioners gave him their verdict, it is unjust to accuse him of a want of generosity in accepting their judgment, which he felt to be the true one; for, as we have seen, the moving light had carried certainty at once to his own mind. Isabella was careful to provide Father Boil and his brethren with all things needful for the efficient discharge of their sacred duties, and she repeatedly commended her dear Indians to the protection of Columbus, and ordered him to punish with severity any Spaniards who should injure them. The vicar-apostolic at this time was a sincere admirer of Columbus.

The equipment of the fleet, under the active encouragement of the queen, was conceived in a large spirit, and carried out vigorously. The

favorably with this base-minded man" ("Life of Columbus," bk. v. c. viii.) M. de Lorgues traces the promotion of this unworthy bishop through the successive sees of Badajos, Cordova, Palencia, and Burgos, to the archbishopric of Rosano, and maintains that he owed his elevation to the favor of Ferdinand, in deference to whom Isabella seems in this instance to have remitted something of her usual vigilance ("Christophe Colomb," t. i. p. 536).

event proved that Soria was not above the temptation of profiting by fraudulent contracts. The outfit included domestic animals, agricultural implements, grain, lime, bricks, iron, and a large supply of glass ornaments. Horses, destined to play an important part in the Spanish conquest of America, were carefully selected; munitions of war were of course not forgotten. The arquebuse was not yet a very efficient weapon, but though crossbows and lances were considered more really useful, firearms and artillery, so well calculated to strike terror into savages, could not be omitted. The number of men was at first fixed at one thousand, but an extension to the number of twelve hundred was permitted, and at the last moment about three hundred more contrived to stow themselves away out of sight, so that about fifteen hundred eventually sailed. Care had been taken to form an active corps of engineers and artisans.

There is reason to think that another priest, not included in Father Boil's company of ecclesiastics, was sent out by the queen as her astronomer royal; and though Washington Irving is silent on the subject, this was no less a man than Father Juan Perez, the guardian of La Rabida. M. de Lorgues\* makes it appear very probable that here also similarity of names has led to a

\* "*Christophe Colomb*," i. p. 419.



mistake, and that Father Perez not only accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, but also was, as he deserved to be, the first priest who set foot in the New World. Twenty days before the departure of the expedition Isabella sent back to Columbus that much-regretted journal which Las Casas was content to epitomize. She said that she had read it through and through, and with an ever-increasing admiration; she asked for further instruction upon several points; she begged him to send her a map with the degrees marked, promising to keep it secret, if he so desired. Finally, she advised him to take with him a skilful astronomer, and, with that thoughtful kindness which was a part of herself, she, as usual, tried to interpret his wishes and convert them into royal enactments. She gave it as her own desire that he should take Father *Antonio* de Marchena, "because he is a good astronomer, and has always seemed to me to be in complete accord with you." She enclosed an order bearing her signature, with a blank space left for the name of some astronomer to be inserted at his good pleasure. The remarks of the queen so exactly apply to Father Juan Perez de Marchena that the name *Antonio* can scarcely be accepted as disproving the identity. It is more easy to suppose that a slip of the pen or a distraction caused a wrong Christian name to be given than that Father Juan Perez had a "second self" named Antonio, a good as-



tronomer and an intimate friend of Columbus, but never mentioned except on this occasion. This letter of the 5th of September, 1493, leaves the matter doubtful, for it does not even say that the appointment was definitely made, still less that it was accepted. We may conjecture, however, that Father Juan Perez, finding in the royal sanction an assurance that he was not undertaking a mere pleasure-trip, would never have refused an offer so tempting to his zeal for science and for souls. If he really did consent, then, without doubt he would have sailed in the admiral's own ship; and as it is known that Father Boil and his companions did not do so, we might conclude that Father Perez would land with Columbus, and therefore before the other priests. These conjectures are supported by direct historical testimony.\*

Columbus named his ship once more after our Blessed Lady. The *Maria-Galanta* had on board the court physician, Chanca, a learned man, whose letters are valuable, and Antonio Casaús, the father of Las Casas, who has been by some

\* M. de Lorgues makes the following citations: Wadding in the Annals of the Franciscans, Father Pedro Simon, Provincial of the Franciscans in New Granada, Brother Romanus Pane of the Hieronymites, and the Dominican historian, Brother Juan Melendez, in their several narratives declare that Father Juan Perez accompanied Columbus on his second voyage. George Cardoso, in the "Portuguese Hagiography," says that he was the first priest who landed in the New World, and the first who said Mass there. Fortunatus Hubertus adds that he blessed the first cross (see "Christophe Colomb," i. p. 421).

writers confounded with his illustrious son. The "Friend of the Indians" was then a student at Seville. Among the passengers were many young gentlemen, who thought it a fine thing to join in an adventurous search for gold, but never meant to soil their dainty hands by manual labor. Firmin Zedo, the worker in metal, had gained by much boasting a high reputation for scientific skill, but in the event it appeared that he was as ignorant as he was conceited. Don Diego Colon and his godson were with the admiral.

On the 25th of September, 1493, the fleet set sail, steering for the Canaries. After taking in large supplies of live stock, already partially acclimatized, Columbus gave to all the captains of the caravels sealed sailing directions, which were only to be opened in case of necessity, and then fixed his course further south than on the previous voyage. He wished to light upon the land of the redoubted Carib tribes, whom the Hispaniola Indians had with one accord placed to the south-east of their own island. On the 13th of October the Spanish fleet lost sight of the island of Ferro. The voyage was most prosperous, with a fair breeze almost all the way. On the 2d of November the signs of land made it prudent to advance cautiously after nightfall, and with the first light on the following day a mountainous island was seen. The admiral christened it Dominica. On their way thither another island ap-

peared on the right, and received the name of Maria-Galanta.\*

The first landing was effected and the first cross planted on this island. Other islands lay near, and they visited the next day the largest of the group, to which Columbus gave the name of Santa Maria de Guadalupe, according to his promise before mentioned. Here they found some women and children, and many dreadful relics of cannibalism. At that very time the men of the island were engaged in procuring captives for their horrible banquets. There is, unfortunately, little reason to doubt that the account given by the first European visitors is true in its main features. Even the deliberate infamy of reserving children for future slaughter, and preparing them carefully till they reached adolescence, seems to have been an established practice among these loathsome barbarians, who, having depopulated the nearest islands, extended their ravages to more distant shores. Theories of autonomy are much disturbed by facts like these. Just or unjust, it would at least have been merciful, not only to their victims but likewise to themselves, to subjugate, or even to enslave, such a tribe.

\* It is worth noticing that Columbus observed the same order of nomenclature on both voyages. His devotion to Our Blessed Lady was ardent, but well regulated. In both instances the first tribute was offered to our Lord, the second to his Mother.

Guadalupe was the very centre of the Carib settlement, so that Columbus had made his calculations well. Without a change of course or a moment's hesitation, he had steered straight across the Atlantic to the object of his search. He sent exploring parties into the island. One of his captains, Diego Marquez, landing without the admiral's permission, set off with eight of his men on a tour of inspection, and lost his way in a tangled forest. Columbus sent the very brave and justly renowned Alonzo de Ojéda to try to find the missing men ; but all his efforts were unavailing. The thought of leaving them in Guadalupe to the mercy of the cannibals could scarcely be endured, but the length of time which had elapsed since their disappearance, and the failure of Ojéda's skilful and daring pursuit, convinced Columbus that he must submit to the sad necessity. Just as the ships were weighing anchor the poor wanderers, starved and exhausted, struggled to the shore. Some Indian women who had been captured by the Caribs escaped to the Spanish ships. The Carib women were as ferocious and almost as expert in war as the men, and they were quite able to defend the island against any ordinary intruders.

Leaving Guadalupe, Columbus sailed to the northwest for Hispaniola, and as he passed between the thickly-clustered islands he found pious names for them one by one, till he came to a

group so multitudinous that, without the aid of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgin martyrs, even his inventive genius might have been at fault. At Santa Cruz a boatful of Carib men and women gave signal proof of the fierce courage of that strange people. When their boat was upset by the Spaniards the savages fought in the water; and if in their flight they found a moment's rest for their feet upon some hidden ledge, they rallied and poured in a shower of arrows upon their pursuers.

Continuing his course, Columbus came, on the 22d of November, to Hispaniola. "By the grace of God," says the doctor, Chanca, "and the science of the admiral, we steered as straight as if we had been following a well-known and beaten track." In his anxiety to see again the little colony of La Navidad, Columbus had allowed himself only two days on Porto Rico, which well deserved a longer stay; and now that the much-expected meeting was close at hand, a thrill of excitement ran through the fleet. At the Gulf of Semana, where the unfortunate skirmish with the natives which formed the closing scene of the first voyage had taken place, Columbus put on shore one of the two young Indians who had returned from Spain. He was never heard of again. The other, Diego Colon, who was a native of San Salvador, remained faithful to the end.

Near the mouth of the Rio del Oro an exploring party found two dead bodies with the arms fastened in the form of a cross, but their nationality was no longer distinguishable. The next day, not far from the same place, they saw two more dead bodies, certainly European. Gloomy suspicions were aroused; the ships pressed forward in all haste, but it was quite dark when they arrived off La Navidad. To keep clear of the dangerous reef, the ships were anchored at some distance from the shore. No light was seen. Columbus fired off two of the heaviest guns, but, though the report echoed far along the shore, no answer came from the fort. Towards midnight a canoe came alongside with two Indians enquiring for the admiral. They were directed to his ship, but would not go on board till they had identified him by the light of a lamp. They said that the Spanish settlers were well, and, by way of confirmation, immediately added that some had died from disease, and some had been killed in their frequent quarrels among themselves, and others had gone to live in a distant part of the island. They also said that Caonabo and another cacique had made war on the friend of Columbus, Guacanagari, and had burnt his village and wounded himself. A little later, when the wine which they had drunk made them less prudent, they informed the young Indian, Diego Colon, that all the little colony had been destroyed; but

this was too dreadful to be believed, and the difference of dialects was supposed to have caused some misapprehension of meaning.

' The next day showed that it was only too true. Columbus waited for a visit from Guacanagari, which the Indians had promised in his name, but he did not come. A melancholy silence reigned over the place so full of life a few months before. The fortress was a blackened ruin, littered with remnants of furniture and broken vessels. The Indian village close by had also been burnt, from which it seemed that at least the Indians of the neighborhood had not been treacherous. Guacanagari was discovered in a village down the coast, confined to his hammock by a wound in his leg, and he sent to beg that Columbus might pay him a visit. The visit was made with all possible parade of power and magnificence. The wounded cacique gave a detailed account of Caonabo's attack, which exactly tallied with the information gathered from other sources; but when Columbus made him submit his wound to medical inspection, no trace of any injury appeared. Suspicion was at once aroused. Father Boil demanded that the perfidious chief should be punished on the spot. Columbus was unwilling to believe in his guilt, but, out of respect to the sacred character of his counsellor, he based his refusal to proceed to extremities upon the necessity of conciliating the In-



dians; and, as his officers agreed with him, Father Boil had to accept the affront with the best grace he could.

It would have been small matter for astonishment if the poor cacique had indeed cast off his Spanish allies on the first good chance, for his fidelity had been rudely tested. Washington Irving, following Oviedo, says that, except the commander, Diego de Araña, and one or two others, the thirty-eight colonists were men whom it was the height of folly to leave in any responsible position, for that they were nearly all of the very lowest class, and for the most part common sailors, who can never be trusted to conduct themselves with discretion ashore. This is not the fact. About half of the number were either gentlemen or master-tradesmen, and it might have been presumed that for a few months, in so exceptional a position, all would be on their best behavior. If they had adhered to only a small portion of the instructions left by Columbus, they might have been found alive on his return. By the Indian account, in which there was no conflicting testimony, the *Niña* was scarcely out of sight when the garrison of the fort began to do very much as they liked. They had found the Indians of Hispaniola so yielding and apparently so helpless that they probably thought themselves quite free from present apprehension, and fancied that it would be time enough for submitting to



unpleasant constraint when some real danger should arise. They roamed about the country in parties of two and three together, extorting gold from the natives, often with violence, carrying off the women, and by their incessant wrangling and outrageous licentiousness doing their best to prove that they were not celestials, and thus to destroy that superstitious reverence which had been their chief security. Araña's authority was set at defiance. His lieutenants, Gutierrez and Escobedo, aspired to share his command, and, having killed a Spaniard in some quarrel, they took the law into their own hands, and marched away with nine malcontents and their Indian wives into the mountains, where Caonabo, a Carib by origin, slew them at once. Others lived at loose quarters among Guacanagari's Indians, screened by his authority from the punishment which their sins deserved. Finally, Caonabo, having fleshed his sword and found the invaders not invulnerable, came down from his hills, burnt the Indian village, and stormed the fort, killing the brave Diego de Araña and his remnant of ten faithful men.

Guacanagari returned the visit, going on board the admiral's ship. Here, unfortunately, one of the Indian women who had fled from the Caribs, and had been detained for instruction and baptism, so captivated by her beauty the susceptible heart of the cacique that he chivalrously deter-

mined to free her and her companions and to brave the consequences. He saw that he was no longer trusted by the Spaniards, and all the studied kindness of Columbus could not make him feel at his ease, especially now that he was actually scheming the liberation of Catalina and her friends. Father Boil read disaffection in his looks, and was confirmed in his conviction that this was the real murderer of Araña. When, a few days later, the Indian women effected their escape and Guacanagari and all his subjects disappeared from the coast, Father Boil was triumphant.

Subsequently the cacique gave incontestable proofs of his friendship for Columbus, and he died in obscurity, hated by the Indians of other tribes for having welcomed and protected their destroyers. Columbus spoke to him of Jesus Christ and baptism, but he had seen more than enough of what Christianity, at least in practice, meant, and he distinctly refused to wear a medal of Our Blessed Lady round his neck, though at last, upon the urgent entreaty of Columbus, whom he really loved, he consented to keep one in his possession.

The Spaniards had no reason to love La Navidad. A better site for a colony was soon found a little to the east of Monte Christi, and near to the golden mountains of Cibao, and the city of Isabella. was traced out with many streets and

squares. Soria's peculations were patent to Columbus when the cargoes were discharged. The provisioning had been "economized" in quantity and quality—for it is an error to suppose that short measure and adulteration are of modern invention. Since it would be necessary when the weather improved to send back the greater part of the fleet, Columbus despatched without delay two exploring parties under Ojéda and Gorvalan. Both returned with enthusiastic reports of the vegetable and mineral wealth of the island, which came most opportunely to throw a gleam of sunshine upon the dark story of disaster. Columbus sent off twelve of the ships under Antonio de Torres, giving him a letter to the sovereigns full of sanguine anticipations, but ending with a petition for fresh supplies of all kinds. This letter, which is still extant, affords proof of the administrative wisdom of Columbus, and the marginal notes show that his suggestions received cordial approval, except that a proposal to enslave the cannibals, with the twofold object of saving their victims, and possibly, by a little wholesome penal servitude, reforming the criminals themselves, gave Isabella matter for meditation, though it was a very mild measure compared with Ferdinand's treatment of unoffending Moors. After much thought, and much consultation of learned theologians, she decided that all the Indians, even Caribs included, were to be won over by gentle-

ness.\* Afterwards she changed her opinion in part, and withdrew her protection from cannibals.

When Columbus subsequently sent five hundred Indians to Spain to be sold for slaves at the discretion of the sovereigns, Irving, with generous indignation, says: "It is painful to find the brilliant renown of Columbus sullied by so foul a stain, and the glory of his enterprises degraded by such flagrant violations of humanity. The customs of the times, however, must be pleaded in his apology." He adds from *Las Casas*: "If those pious and learned men, whom the sovereigns took for guides and instructors, were so ignorant of the injustice of this practice, it is no wonder that the unlettered admiral should not be conscious of its impropriety."†

This is unjust to Columbus. Irving omits an important extenuating circumstance. The Indians sent by Columbus to Spain were not, like

\* Isabella certainly judged rightly and Columbus was in the wrong; for to sanction any system of slavery is to perpetuate the violation of a natural right which follows close upon the right to live. A course of penal servitude might have been beneficial, and was in no sense unjust to a nation which lived by murder, but no royal enactments could in the world of actual existence prevent the penal servitude of a whole people from passing into veritable slavery. Yet to win over Caribs by gentle treatment, as Isabella proposed, is, to speak for ourselves, more than the Colonial Office would like to attempt. The difficulty cannot recur in these times, because preaching the Gospel is no longer a state concern. Savages not under British rule may cook and eat one another at their discretion; but woe to them, whoever they be, if they touch a British subject!

† "Life of Columbus," bk. viii. c. v.

the unhappy negroes in the detestable traffic which began later, torn from their homes and peaceful employments without a shadow of provocation, but they were prisoners who had been taken with arms in their hands in the first battles with the cacique, Guatiguana, who had caused many Spaniards to be put to death. They were prisoners of war, and in some sense their liberty was forfeit. Even in our own days prisoners of war have been detained like malefactors in close confinement for a considerable time. It would be wrong to attempt to palliate slavery in any form, but it must be admitted that the offence of Columbus differs not only in degree but in kind from the odious cruelty of the African slave-dealers. Las Casas, the philanthropist, whose mild reproof of Columbus has been quoted, was, even he, not immaculate in this matter; for to save his beloved Indians he recommended the importation of negroes, not as a good thing, but as the lesser evil, since they were of stronger frame.\* The immorality of such a substitution ought to have been clear to him. The truth is that Columbus, in the face of the current ideas of his time, deserves far more our praise for protecting the inoffensive, than for being willing to enslave the hostile, Indians or the Caribs.

Columbus has been also severely reproached

\* Robertson, "History of America," bk. iii. (an. 1517.)

for imposing tribute of gold instead of grain upon the Indians of Hispaniola after the war, and forcing them to undertake distasteful labors. This charge derives its greatest force from the insinuation of avarice which it contains.

The building of the new city was undertaken with enthusiasm, but the first fervor of industry soon gave place to disappointment, for the much-coveted gold came in but slowly, and epidemic sickness completed the despondency. Columbus, although he was himself weak and suffering, tried to push forward the public works and to encourage the workmen, but when the fleet had departed for Europe, discontent spread rapidly. The mischief-making metallurgist announced dogmatically that the fancied gold was iron pyrites, or something similar, that the golden ornaments of the natives were heirlooms and could not be replaced, and that all the golden dreams were a delusion. A plot was concerted to seize the remaining five ships, but Columbus discovered it in time. To prevent any attempt of the kind, he put all the artillery and ammunition upon one vessel, which he consigned to trustworthy hands. Then, leaving his brother Diego in charge of the ships and the town, he led a general expedition into the mountains, forming a little army of infantry and cavalry, which observed strict discipline and moved in imposing array, always marching past the Indian settlements with drums beating and colors flying,

towards the mountains of Cibao, where the warlike Caonabo ruled. Some of the natives came forward to propitiate them with presents, others took refuge in their huts, apparently deeming themselves safe behind the frail rampart of a wattle-gate. Columbus did not permit his soldiers to dispel the innocent delusion. The report which Ojéda and Gorvalan had brought back of the rich promise of the island was fully confirmed. The streams were auriferous enough to convince Firmin Zedo himself, traces of copper were discerned, and precious gums and spices in lavish abundance filled the forests in the valley. To the ardent soul of Columbus, as he gazed from the mountain pass across the glorious Vega Real, the scene before him was as a glimpse of Paradise. It was, however, very much too soon to dream of heaven.

Columbus with much skill selected a strong position, and traced out the plan of a fortress intended to protect the passage from Isabella to the gold-fields. He directed the work in person, and having named the fort after St. Thomas, to remind his followers of their wrong-headed incredulity, he appointed Pedro Margarite, a nobleman of Catalonia and a knight of the Order of Sant Iago, to the command, with a garrison of fifty-six men. He himself returned with the rest to Isabella. The island of Hispaniola was divided into five little kingdoms, under five independent



caciques. News did not spread rapidly from one principality to another, and the Indians of the Vega Real still regarded the strangers with veneration. Caonabo was not once heard of in the course of the excursion. A messenger from Pedro Margarite very soon brought intelligence that the Indians showed signs of hostility, and that Caonabo was preparing an attack. It was the old story. As soon as the protecting presence of the commander-in-chief was withdrawn it had fared ill with the poor Indians. The Spaniards had learned to obey him, but they obeyed no one else, and Margarite even set the example of licentious conduct. A reinforcement of twenty men was considered quite sufficient for the occasion, and thirty more were told off to make a road for the passage of troops.

The real anxiety of Columbus lay in the new city. Strange maladies caused by noxious vapors, and helped by vicious indulgence, spread among the Spaniards. The supply of flour failed, and hands to grind the wheat were growing scarcer every day. It was no time, the viceroy thought, for standing upon pride of caste. He ordered all the able-bodied men, gentle and simple, to take their turn at the grinding, under penalty of having their rations diminished. It was an indignity not to be borne by the "blue blood" of Spain, even though no other course could save the little colony from famine and pestilence. Father Boil



sympathized with the young cavaliers, and reproved Columbus for his "cruelty" when, according to his threat, he punished the refractory by diminution of rations. By loudly proclaiming his disapprobation of the measures adopted, he, perhaps thoughtlessly, did much to foment disaffection. When, in spite of his remonstrances, the admiral persisted in his conscientious efforts to save his people from destruction, Father Boil committed the extravagant folly of excommunicating him for doing what he felt to be his duty. He was altogether incapable of understanding the great soul of Columbus. Either the theological course of study at La Rabida or common sense was enough to certify that the censures of the Church only fall upon sinful acts, and that where no fault exists excommunication has no meaning.\* Father Boil was resisting legitimate authority in a civil matter, and deserved chastisement. As he had not the spirit of a martyr, a little fasting on bread and water reduced him to silence, though, of course, it did not improve his temper. Many proud spirits had been offended beyond forgive-

\* "Censura sic communiter definiri solet : Est poena spiritualis et medicinalis, qua homo baptizatus *delinquens* et contumax per potestatem ecclesiasticam quorundam bonorum spiritualium usu privatur" ("Compend. Theol. Mor." P. Joan Gury, S.J., t. ii. § 932). "Requiritur ad censuræ validitatem, ut peccatum cui infligitur sit mortale, externum, consummatum, non mere præteritum, et conjunctum cum contumacia" (*Ibid.* § 934). "An quis ligetur censura, quam manifeste injustam esse novit? Resp. Negative" (*Ibid.* § 937).

ness, but a more conciliatory policy might have been even more disastrous, and probably was not feasible. The hidalgos were not open to argument where their pride was touched. To exempt them from a share in the burden was to throw it all upon a few poor men, who, with their decreasing numbers, would have had to be literally worked to death to supply the growing wants of the invalids and privileged idlers. Columbus in this emergency showed once more that indomitable will which clings to duty at all costs, and braves popular clamor rather than commit injustice or depart from principle.

When, by the unflinching energy of the commander, good order had been to some extent restored, the garrison of Isabella was sent under Ojéda to St. Thomas, where Pedro Margarite and Ojéda were to exchange commands, Ojéda remaining in charge of the fortress and setting Margarite free for a military progress round the island. He sent admirable instructions to Pedro Margarite, whose virtue he had not yet found cause to doubt. He ordered him to be most circumspect in his dealings with the natives, to treat them with scrupulous justice, and to do his best to win their affections and predispose them for becoming Christians. Then having appointed a council, consisting of Father Boil and three leading men, under the presidency of his brother, Don Diego, to govern the colony in his absence, he set

sail with three of the five remaining ships, selecting those of lightest draught. The one which he took for himself was the same brave little *Niña* which had served him so faithfully before. It seemed almost ungrateful to change that now famous name, but to confer the name of the great Franciscan saint was, in the judgment of Columbus, only to add honor, and so the *Niña* became the *Santa Clara*.

Independently of all the grief and anxiety which the misconduct of the Spaniards had caused, the delay itself must have been a severe trial to the impetuous spirit of a discoverer. At last Columbus was able to continue his voyage. On the 24th of April he sailed from Isabella, soon arrived at the eastern point of Cuba, and at first stood along the southern coast of that island. He found the natives very well disposed, but as they invariably answered all enquiries about gold by pointing to the south, he resolved to leave Cuba for the present, and, sailing due south, came to Jamaica. The inhabitants of this island showed hostility at first, but Columbus convinced them of his superiority in arms, and they began to make friendly overtures. Finding no gold, he returned to Cuba to continue his westerly explorations. For nearly a month he followed the windings of the coast. The progress was slow, for the navigation among the groups of little islands which at intervals beset the coast was very dangerous and fatiguing,

and from time to time they paused to explore the country. All the explorers, with the admiral himself, were at length thoroughly convinced that Cuba was the mainland of Asia. The little vessels had sustained many injuries, and were not in condition to undertake a very extended voyage. Reluctantly, but convinced that he was acting for the best, Columbus turned to retrace his course, and once more just failed to discover that Cuba was an island. On the southern as on the northern coast he had all but reached the western extremity. As they sailed along they had kept up a running intercourse with the natives, who were of all the islanders the most uniformly friendly. A story is told of a good old man who gave the admiral much pious advice. The chaplain of the little fleet had just said Mass, at which the Indians, understanding that it was an act of religion, had behaved with the greatest reverence. The old man came to Columbus, and conversing with him by the help of the young Indian, Diego Colon, told him that he had heard of all his great achievements, but that he must be on his guard against pride, adding that when the soul leaves the body there is a dark abode for those who have inflicted evil on their fellow-men, and a place of delights for those who have promoted peace. When Columbus told him of the majesty of the Spanish sovereigns, the old man wanted to go with him, but his family persuaded him that it

was his duty to remain. Columbus promised to free them from the incursions of the Caribs. If, instead of a busy politician like Father Boil and the virtuous but for the most part sadly unenterprising monks whom he had chosen to accompany him, there had been a few genuine apostles, a more glorious field for missionary labor could scarcely have been found than the fair island of Cuba before Spanish profligacy had blighted its promise. "All is now silent and deserted; civilization, which has covered some parts of Cuba with glittering cities, has rendered this a solitude. The whole race of Indians has long since passed away, pining and perishing beneath the domination of the strangers whom they welcomed so joyfully to their shores." \*

Columbus only abandoned Cuba for the time being, fully intending to return in greater force, and, after making his way to the civilized parts of Asia, to circumnavigate the globe and sail up the Red Sea. However, as, in his belief at this period of his discoveries, Cuba was the extremity of the mainland of Asia, it was of immense political importance to establish the prior claim of Spain beyond the power of Portugal to dispute it. A solemn document was drawn up containing the names and depositions of all the members of the expedition, certifying that all without exception

\* Irving, "Life of Columbus," bk. vii. c. iv.

were convinced that this was the mainland of Asia.

As the wind was not fair for Hispaniola, Columbus first sailed round Jamaica, and then, in spite of the state of the ships, was in the act of making a fresh descent upon the Carib shores with his formidable force of fifty men, the combined number of the three crews ; but he had overtaxed his strength, and he was carried in a prolonged fainting fit back to Isabella, where, when he returned to consciousness, he found his brother Bartholomew standing by his bed. Bartholomew seems to have met with many delays before he arrived at the English court, but he was kindly received by Henry the Seventh, and assistance in the prosecution of his design was actually promised. On his way to bear the good tidings to his brother Christopher, he heard in Paris that the expedition was already an accomplished fact, and the French king received him with high honor and assisted him liberally with money. He was welcomed with open arms at the Spanish court, and, as he was himself an experienced navigator, he was put in command of three vessels which were starting with supplies. His arrival was most opportune ; for though Diego was a most estimable man, he was not formed by nature for coercing discontented spirits. Bartholomew was a man of powerful frame and unbending will, knowing by intuition the moment for action,

and striking fearlessly. He had not the gentleness of his great brother, but his manly virtue and genuine nobility of character made ample amends for some harshness of manner and defect of refinement. Although he was a devoted Catholic, with unflinching faith and honest piety, the more spiritual gifts of the interior life were beyond his appreciation. Diego was naturally of a studious turn. He revered his brother Christopher as a second father, and looked upon it as a call from heaven to help him in whatever way he could.

Christopher, thanking God for sending him Bartholomew at that critical juncture, at once appointed him *adelantado*, or governor, and put all the power in his hands during his own convalescence. During the five months of his own absence the affairs of the colony had grown all but desperate. If any proof were wanting of his competency to govern, it might be found in the invariable confusion which marked his absence. The wonder is, not that one trouble followed another till ruin stared the Spaniards in the face, but that discipline could have ever been maintained at all among such reckless libertines.

Pedro Margarite left the fort of St. Thomas, as had been arranged, in the hands of Ojéda, but with that one act his obedience ended. Instead of making the prescribed progress round the island, he descended into the beautiful valley, and there



set the example to his soldiers of every sordid vice, till the poor Indians of the Vega, in their turn, learned to hate the very name of Spaniard. Then, terrified to think of what he had done, he concerted with the help of Father Boil, to whom—of course, he did not reveal his own misdeeds—a clandestine departure to Europe for the purpose of representing to the sovereigns the miseries which the misgovernment of Columbus had brought upon the poor deluded colonists and the poor persecuted Indians. This was the general policy of the enemies of Columbus. By their own malversation they made peace and good order impossible, and then they demanded that he should be punished for their iniquities. The blackest feature in Margarite's dark villany is his ingratitude; for Columbus had treated him with marked kindness, and had written in his behalf to procure the favor of Isabella for the wife and children left in Spain by the Knight of Sant Iago. Father Boil was easily persuaded that it was his duty to inform the crown of what was going on in the colony, and when Columbus returned to Isabella, the deserters had made good their flight in the ships which brought Bartholomew Columbus. Diego's authority had been despised from the first by the hidalgo faction. Margarite had not even cared to delegate his command. The soldiers were suddenly left without any general, and could not long conceal

their weakness. Ten Spaniards were killed in one place, and forty more were burnt in a hospital by order of Guatiguana. A formidable league of four out of the five caciques, Guacanagari refusing to join, had been formed by Caonabo, who now moved to the attack of St. Thomas. Ojéda was a real soldier and was on his guard. Caonabo found assault and starvation equally unavailing, and, after thirty days' siege, decamped.

Soon after Ojéda executed one of the most daring stratagems on record. He went with nine cavaliers to seek Caonabo in the midst of his own people. He promised to bestow upon him no less a gift than the Angelus bell of Fort St. Thomas, which was supposed to have the power to collect a multitude by the sound of its voice, if he would come to Isabella and make terms with Columbus. The offer was too tempting, and Caonabo agreed to go, but he insisted on taking a large army with him. On the march Ojéda persuaded the chief to mount behind him and have a ride on the proud war horse, which had so often excited his admiration. He anticipated no danger with his army round him, and gladly accepted the offer. Ojéda made a few circles with his delighted captive before the eyes of all the Indians, and then set spurs to the horse, while the other cavaliers, closing in with the threat of instant death, secured Caonabo, and the raid was successfully accomplished. From that time Ca-

onabo had the most enthusiastic reverence for the brave Ojéda. In the presence of Columbus he would not give the slightest sign of respect, but when Ojéda entered the room he rose at once to salute the man who had dared to carry him off in open day with all his warriors looking on. It must have been a relief to Columbus to have Caonabo safe, but, when the first astonishment of the Indians had subsided, their hostility only became more bitter, for the captured cacique had a brother who shared his martial spirit and tried to organize a general rising of the tribes for his release. Guacanagari alone would not respond to the summons.

The arrival of Antonio de Torres with four shiploads of provisions improved the condition of affairs. He was the bearer of a gracious letter from Isabella asking the admiral either to come himself, or to send his brother Bartholomew or some one whom he judged competent, to be present at the final adjudication of a boundary line to separate the possessions of Spain and Portugal. Columbus was still ill in bed, Bartholomew could on no account be spared, so Diego was sent to counteract as far as possible the misrepresentations of Father Boil and Pedro Margarite. He took with him five hundred Indian prisoners, to be dealt with at the discretion of the sovereigns.

Isabella, besides writing to her viceroy of the Indies, had sent a letter to the colonists, bidding

them obey him as they would herself. These two letters would do more than much medical attendance to help the convalescence of Columbus, and he rapidly regained his health, sufficiently to be able to take the field in person against the confederate caciques. All the effective force he could muster amounted to two hundred infantry, twenty horsemen, and a few formidable bloodhounds, while word was brought that an immense multitude from all parts of the populous island was gathered in the Vega within two days' march, ready to burst upon the little town and sweep away the handful of detested invaders. The crimes of the Spaniards had put all conciliation out of the question, and Columbus, forced in self-defence to become a conqueror, assumed the offensive. He marched out with the adelantado. Ojéda, at the head of his twenty horse, was a host in himself. The infantry attacked in two divisions, and Ojéda came down like a whirlwind. The Indians, in spite of their numbers, fled panic-struck, yielding to the resolute little band of Europeans an easy victory, which, if we are to compare the numbers engaged on both sides, two hundred men against, it is said, one hundred thousand, may well be called miraculous.\* The subjugation of the island was soon complete.

\*The number of the Indians cannot be even approximately ascertained, but it must have been very large. The victory was a wonderful achievement, but we are scarcely justified in appeal-

Meantime, Father Boil and Margarite were busily defaming Columbus to protect themselves.

"They charged him with tasking the community with excessive labor during a time of general sickness and debility; with stopping the rations of individuals on the most trifling pretext, to the great detriment of their health; with wantonly inflicting severe corporal punishments on the common people; and with heaping indignities on Spanish gentlemen of rank. They said nothing, however, of the exigencies which had called for unusual labor, nor of the idleness and profligacy of the commonalty, which required coercion and chastisement; nor of the seditious cabals of the Spanish cavaliers, who had been treated with indulgence rather than severity. In addition to these complaints, they represented the state of confusion of the island in consequence of the absence of the admiral, and the uncertainty which prevailed concerning his fate, intimating the probability of his having perished in his foolhardy attempts to explore unknown seas and discover unprofitable lands." \*

ing to it as an evident "miracle," using the word in its theological sense. Panic fear is an unreasonable thing, and does not proceed by numerical calculations. The vague terrors of ignorance defy argument. If we wish to realize the effect of Ojéda's charge with horses and dogs, we may try to imagine what would be the state of mind of an English mob, unprovided with guns, if they saw a score of fine African lions advancing at a run to attack them in the open plain.

\* Irving, "Life of Columbus," bk. viii. c. viii.

Isabella could not but feel her sublime confidence in Columbus somewhat shaken by the apparently disinterested statement of a man of the reputation and rank of the vicar-apostolic. It seemed clear that the affairs of Hispaniola required investigation in any case; and if the admiral had really perished at sea, it became doubly necessary to take stringent measures. A fleet was on the point of starting with supplies, and Fonseca was ordered to choose some trusty officer for the command, and commission him to enquire into all abuses and make a full report of the same; but if he found that the admiral had returned safe from his voyage, he was not to supersede him or interfere with his authority.

At this conjuncture Don Diego arrived, and not only bore witness to the fact that Columbus was alive, but gave quite a new coloring to his conduct. Isabella gladly admitted a more favorable judgment, and the royal orders were so far modified that, instead of allowing Fonseca to select his own commissioner, Juan Aguado, supposed to be an especial friend of Columbus, was sent out to ascertain the state of the colony. Aguado, like Margarite, had experienced the marked favor of Columbus, and, like Margarite, returned evil for good. He had been chosen for his office with the express object of soothing as far as possible the unpleasantness of the measures which it had been judged necessary to adopt. The

royal letters of credit were pompously vague ; but instead of softening down their possible meaning, he pushed it to the extremest limit. Columbus was engaged in suppressing a fresh revolt of the brothers of Caonabo when he arrived, and seemed to him, in his pitiful conceit, to be keeping out of the way in fear and trembling. He insolently ignored Don Bartholomew's presence, causing the terms of his appointment to be announced with sound of trumpet : " Cavaliers, esquires, and other persons who by our orders are in the Indies, we send to you Juan Aguado, our groom of the chambers, who will speak to you on our part. We command you to give him faith and credit." Instead of keeping to his instructions and collecting information, he at once proceeded to order numerous arrests, and had the presumption to send off a troop of horse to find the recreant viceroy in his hiding-place and bring him to judgment.

Columbus needed no summoning. Aguado was preparing himself for the encounter, and meant to show who was master. He was quite disconcerted when his noble victim meekly signified his submission to the will of the sovereigns. Accusers were numerous, for the star of Columbus was declining ; and as soon as Aguado had collected enough evidence to achieve the final ruin of the Genoese adventurer and his upstart family, he proposed to return to Spain. Columbus resolved



to go with him. Just as they were preparing to start the most fearful storm in the memory of man swept over the harbor and destroyed all the caravels except the *Santa Clara* (*olim Niña*), which bore a charmed life. While she was being repaired for the admiral's own use, and a new vessel was being built for Aguado from the wrecks, word was brought of an opportune discovery of some excavations in a distant part of the island, which, from the greater abundance of gold in the vicinity, seemed to be the mines which had been opened in ancient times. The adelantado was sent to survey, and found appearances very promising. Columbus left him in command, and set sail with Aguado on the 10th of March, 1496, the two caravels being crowded with invalids and homesick colonists.

The voyage was one tedious struggle against contrary winds, so that after a month of tacking and veering the Caribbee Islands were still in sight. Not only community of interests kept the vessels together, but it would seem that, once at sea, Aguado surrendered his supremacy. Perhaps he felt it the part of wisdom to keep on good terms with a man who, slandered and outraged as he had been, was still the greatest of navigators, at a time when an ocean voyage was still a perilous enterprise. They landed in Guadalupe to take in supplies, nor did they make their second start till the 20th of April. Again their progress

was so slow that provisions began to fail when they had still far to go, and at the beginning of June they were reduced to such famine that only the strong hand of Columbus saved the Indians on board from being killed and eaten. When he would by no means permit this atrocity, a clamorous demand was made that the poor creatures might be thrown overboard, thus at least to lessen the number of useless mouths. Columbus stood firm, representing that Indians were fellow-men with souls to be saved, and that these Indians in particular were being taken to Spain expressly to be instructed and baptized. He added that in three days they would sight Cape St. Vincent. There were many experienced seamen with him, not one of whom agreed with him in this declaration, though they were also widely at variance among themselves. However, once more he was right. On the evening of the third day he maintained that the land was near, and gave orders to take in sail as a precaution, much to the displeasure of all his weary and famished men, who loudly protested that they could not bear their sufferings any longer, and would far rather run the risk of being dashed ashore in the dark than submit to any unnecessary prolongation of their cruel hunger. Daylight revealed Cape St. Vincent, and, with an involuntary impulse of returning reverence, they recognized the surpassing skill of their wonderful commander. The invalids in

the ships had experienced on the long voyage the fatherly solicitude of Columbus, and many who at first had thought favorably of Aguado had found out by constant intercourse his vanity and worthlessness. The poor and the afflicted, oppressed Indians or sick Spaniards, always seemed to be drawn by some secret sympathy nearer in their distress to the kind heart of the great admiral, but their friendship was no protection to him against the machinations of his powerful enemies.

The ships reached Cadiz on the 11th of June. Caonabo never saw Spain. Columbus had hoped to win him by the display of the magnificence of Spanish power, and then restore him to his former influence to be a useful friend; but his wild nature pined in captivity, and he died on the voyage.

The wretched condition and dejected mien of the starved crews confirmed the sinister reports which had been widely spread, and Columbus was once again in popular esteem a visionary, cheating himself and his followers with golden dreams. His sanguine anticipations were met with a sneer of incredulity. Before the first voyage his speculations had appeared unfounded; after the second voyage his undeniable discoveries were declared to be worse than useless.

On his arrival at Cadiz Columbus sent to inform the sovereigns of his return with Aguado, and then waited a whole month for their answer.

It was during this delay that he wore publicly the habit of St. Francis. The fact is incontestable, and the motive equally so. To a Protestant like Washington Irving, the idea of an admiral walking about the streets with a rope round his waist and a cowl on his head was so incongruous that to save his hero's sanity he felt himself bound to suppose that this was the fulfilment of another of those extravagant vows made at sea under stress of weather. There is no mention elsewhere of any such vow, and Catholics do not think a man insane because he declares that he either is, or would like to be, a monk. Columbus had ample cause for being disgusted with the world and its ingratitude, and, whether Father Juan Perez had just returned to La Rabida or had never left it, Columbus might possibly have wished, with the consent of his wife, to end his days in the peace of the cloister; or if he believed that the ungrateful world still needed his assistance, or felt with remorse that his poor wife had had already too much to suffer on his account, he might have wished to signify that he was, as far as the duties of his state of life permitted, a true son of St. Francis. We hear no more of good Father Juan Perez de Marchena, except the solitary fact that he died before his friend. The records of the convent, as was said before, have unfortunately perished.

A month's interval gave the active enemies of

Columbus, Bernard Boil, Pedro Margarite, Juan de Aguado, and the potentate, Fonseca, time to do their worst. However, when the answer to his letter came at length, it was all that could be desired. The sovereigns expressed their gratitude and congratulation, and invited him to present himself at court as soon as he had sufficiently recovered from the fatigues of the voyage. Isabella seems to have had all her doubts dispelled as soon as she was once more able to see and speak to Columbus. Not one word of blame seems to have been spoken in the interview at Burgos, and though we know from subsequent events that Ferdinand was even at this time unfriendly, yet Isabella was incapable of dissimulation, and soon after this she wrote to Columbus an unofficial letter, still extant, which bears witness to her undiminished veneration.

The time was almost as unpropitious for the prosecution of distant discovery as the closing period of the Moorish war had been. Isabella's maternal heart was entirely occupied with matrimonial projects for the welfare of her children, and Ferdinand was entirely engrossed with his European wars. He cared, indeed, notably little about his new dominions, which hitherto had been more burdensome than lucrative to his treasury. King Ferdinand was a shrewd man of business, but by no means a far-sighted monarch. Columbus asked for eight vessels to follow up the Cuban

explorations and establish a firm footing on the mainland of Asia. It was not till the following spring (1497), that the proposal received real attention. In the meantime, the kind forethought of the queen had arranged an interview, which gave him a new friend, worthy to stand by the side of Father Juan Perez or to take his place.

Jayme Ferrer, the lapidary of Burgos, is very briefly mentioned by Irving,\* who gives the substance of a letter written by him at the command of Isabella to Columbus, advising him to explore further to the south. He was a great traveller and a zealous Christian, much esteemed by Isabella, and a personal friend of the great Cardinal Mendoza. The list of his accomplishments is given after the pretentious manner of those days, and ranges over everything knowable in human science, from mathematics to poetry, and he was a theologian besides. The versatility of his genius may be conjectured from the fact that the professional mineralogist and observant traveller wrote a theological treatise on the allegories of Dante,† and his learning seems to have been, in the judgment of his contemporaries, not less deep than varied. The fragments of his writings which remain confirm this opinion. He was a man worth knowing, and, as he

\* "Life of Columbus," bk. x. c. i.

† "Sentencias Catolicas del divo poeta Danté." Barcelona. 1545.

had by this time returned from his travels in the East, Isabella summoned him to court. He had formed from the first a high idea of the scientific value of the achievements of Columbus, and was one of the few who shared with Isabella an insight into the religious character of the enterprise, which he styled "more divine than human." In January of the year 1495 he wrote to the queen, offering some advice about the Papal line of demarcation, and in the letter he said: "I believe that God, in the high and mysterious designs of his providence, has chosen him as his accredited agent for this work, which seems to me nothing less than a prelude and preparation to the things which God, according to his good providence, proposes to make known to us in due time to his glory, and to the salvation and happiness of the world." \* In his letter to Columbus his admiration is still more marked. He says:

"The infallible providence of God sent the great Thomas from the West to the East to make known to the Indies our holy Catholic law; and you, sir, Providence has sent by an opposite path from the East to the West, in order that, by the divine will, you may reach the East, the furthest limits of Upper India, to carry to the nations which have not heard the preaching

\* "Coleccion diplomática," n. 68.



of Thomas the knowledge of salvation, and to fulfil the words of the prophet: *In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum.*

“Without fear of error, I affirm that you, sir, hold the office of an apostle, of an ambassador of God, sent by the divine decrees to reveal his holy name to lands where the truth is still unknown. It would not have been beyond the claims of your mission, in dignity or importance, if a pope or a cardinal of Rome had shared your glorious labors in those lands. But the Pope is prevented by grave concerns, and the cardinal by his relish of the comforts of life, from following such a course as yours. It is quite true, nevertheless, that with an object like yours the prince of the apostolic army came to Rome, and that his fellow-laborers, vessels of election, went about the world, spending their strength, severely tried, with sandals worn and garments rent, their bodies exhausted by the dangers, the hardships, and fatigues of those travels, which often gave them only the bread of bitterness to eat.” \*

The friendship of such a man as Jayme Ferrer came when it was most needed to help Columbus in his old age, to keep up his courage to the end through many tribulations.

\* This letter shows that Jayme Ferrer, true Catholic and loyal son of the Pope, was no timid devotee.



## CHAPTER IV.

ISABELLA'S kind reception of Columbus somewhat deranged the plans of his calumniators. Fonseca saw that it was necessary to proceed cautiously; for though his unforgiven foe was going down the hill, he was not quite near enough to the precipice yet, and a premature attempt to push him over might be dangerous to the assailant. No amount of royal favor could remove the disagreeable impression produced by the sallow faces and wasted frames of the unsuccessful Argonauts, and even when the sovereigns were at leisure at last to give all requisite orders for a new expedition, much remained to be done before the orders were carried out; and the state of things sadly resembled what we have already described in speaking of the preparations for the first voyage, when sailors hung back in dismay and ship-owners put all obstacles in the way of departure. Fonseca did not dare to disobey Isabella, but he could and did devise delays and impediments in the execution of unwelcome commands. The wedding of Prince Juan was fol-

lowed exactly six months later by his death. Columbus could not break in upon the deep grief of his benefactress.

He employed part of his forced leisure in executing a deed of entail, the terms of which reveal to us his inmost soul, and explain much that would otherwise want explaining.

He begins in the name of the Blessed Trinity, to whom he refers the first idea, and the complete conviction which succeeded it, that a passage to the Indies by sailing westward was possible. He recalls with gratitude that by the grace of our Lord he had discovered the land of the Indies and numerous islands, and, as great revenues are sure to come to him therefrom, he therefore founds this "Majoratus."

He places the deed under the protection of the Holy See,\* because his only object in framing it is the service of Almighty God. He appoints his son Diego his heir, and the property is to descend by primogeniture. He requires those who succeed him to use in their signature no other title than that of admiral, and to add always the formula which he had invented, and which was a prayer in itself—namely, "S. S. A. S. X. M. J. XPO Ferens,"† the letters being arranged in four lines.

\* "Coleccion Diplomática," docum. 126.

† "Servus Supplex Altissimi Salvatoris, Christus, Maria, Joseph, Christo Ferens" ("Christophe Colomb," i. p. 585). Irving says: "It [his signature] partook of the pedantic and bigoted

The first stipulation is in behalf of the poor, to whom a tenth of all the revenues is to be assigned, "for the honor of God eternal and almighty." Among the poor, any destitute members of the family are to have a prior claim. In this last clause we may recognize the Christian virtues of humility and well-ordered charity.

Then the admiral proceeds at once to the thought which lay nearest to his heart, the long-cherished purpose of recovering the Holy Sepulchre. He bids his son and heir remember that when he was planning the voyage to the Indies he had designed to petition the sovereigns to devote all the profits to the conquest of Jerusalem, and requires him accordingly to strive to amass much treasure, in order to be able to assist the king, if he would undertake the enterprise, or, if he would not, then to fit out a large army and go without him; in which case he hoped that the help, refused for the commencement, would be conceded for the prosecution of the crusade.

After having "liberated his soul" with regard

character of the age, and perhaps of the peculiar character of the man, who, considering himself mysteriously elected and set apart from among men for certain great purposes, adopted a correspondent formality and solemnity in all his concerns." A pious signature scarcely deserves such harsh censure. A little lower he says: "Don Fernando, son to Columbus, says that his father, when he took his pen in hand, usually commenced by writing, 'Jesus cum Maria sit nobis in via'" ("Life of Columbus," Appendix, n. 34).

to the Holy Sepulchre, he shows his solicitude next for the temporal power of the Pope:

“*Item*, I ordain that if, for the chastisement of our sins, any schism should come to be in the Church of God, and any person of any rank or nation whatsoever should endeavor by violence to deprive it of its privileges and possessions, the said Don Diego, or whosoever shall possess the said Majoratus, do immediately, under pain of disinheritance, put himself at the feet of the Holy Father (unless, indeed, the latter should have turned heretic—a thing which God will not permit), and offer himself and his dependants to do him service with all their resources, with arms and money, interest and principal, to crush the schism and prevent the spoliation of the Church.\*

That nothing may be wanting to the “ultramontane” character of this interesting document, another obligation is imposed of building in the Vega-Real in Hispaniola a church under the invocation of “St. Mary of the Conception”—a mode of honoring our Blessed Lady which supposes the doctrine of her “Immaculate Conception.”

Then a hospital is to be founded, and chairs of theology established for the instruction of those who shall devote themselves to the conversion of the Indians.

\* “Coleccion Diplomática,” docum. 126.

Isabella during this interval of delay tried to induce Columbus to accept a large tract in Hispaniola for his private property, with the title of duke or marquis, but he resolutely refused. Perhaps he thought it inconsistent with his sublime vocation to accept a reward which, while it injured his position by making him in a manner *primus inter pares*, might tempt him in his old age, under the specious pretext of attending to the interests of his children, to make a home for himself and them, and, sinking into dignified ease, to give up the further prosecution of his grand but self-sacrificing and eminently "uncomfortable" designs. It seems scarcely likely that his sole motive in refusing Isabella's generous proposal was a prudent fear of increasing his unpopularity. Nor, on the other hand, was he guilty of foolish inconsistency in rejecting a new source of revenue, since the wealth which he desired for crusading purposes was sure to come sooner or later, he thought, from "the eighth" guaranteed to him in the capitulation drawn up at Santa Fé, if there was faith in a royal word and gold in the Indies. It was long in coming, for we find him saying in 1504, in a letter to his son Diego: "I receive nothing of the revenue due to me; I live by borrowing." And in another place: "Little have I profited by twenty years of service with such toils and perils, since at present I do not own a roof in Spain. If I desire to eat or sleep, I have

no resort but an inn, and for the most times have not wherewithal to pay my bill." \*

Fresh causes of delay arose. Ferdinand was much distressed for money, but Isabella had actually set aside certain funds for the new expedition, when, in October, 1497, Pedro Alonza Niño returned from Hispaniola, and by his foolish boast that he brought much gold caused the immediate revocation of the royal grant; for it was supposed that this valuable freight would more than suffice to meet the demands of the admiral. When the unfortunate captain, who had gone to visit his family before forwarding his despatches, came to confess that his gold was in the shape of three hundred Indian prisoners of war to be sold, Isabella and Ferdinand, for different reasons, were equally disgusted. Although the letter of the royal instructions ordained that Indians concerned in the death of Spaniards should be enslaved, yet Isabella was shocked at the number. Arrangements had to be recommenced. Orders and counter-orders wasted much time. The anxiety of Columbus increased with every fresh delay; for he knew by sad experience how much the colony depended upon imported food, and how scarcity of provisions increased the difficulty of governing selfish and discontented and seditious men. Yet even his

\* Irving's "Life of Columbus," bk. xviii. c. ii.



sagacious mind could not easily have conjectured the extent of the evils which tried to the utmost all the grand qualities, the high courage, the strong endurance, the vigilance, the practical wisdom, the mingled severity and mercy of the good Adelantado. The more he displayed his anxiety to hurry forward the preparations, the more "his cold-blooded enemy, Fonseca,"‡ tried to interpose vexatious obstacles. In his despair, when volunteers could not be found, he proposed a measure which, though it met with the eager approval of the sovereigns, must be allowed to have been even in that dire extremity a grievous error of judgment. This was to commute the imprisonment of lesser criminals into a term of service in the colony. *Hinc lacrymæ!* There were bad men enough, and "basely bad," in Hispaniola already without turning loose into the island men convicted of multi-form villany. Columbus, who to the end could never fully realize the deep wickedness of which the human heart is capable, no doubt thought that this plan might be regarded as the lesser of two evils, inasmuch as to send no ships at all was to consign the colony to certain destruction, while to send out men who had misdemeaned themselves at home was to give them a chance of becoming honest men, a chance which many of them, under the combined inducement of gratitude and

‡ Irving's "Life of Columbus," bk. ix. c. iii.

interest, might be glad to seize. It was a melancholy mistake, and one which brought its own punishment.

By the most strenuous exertions, Columbus succeeded at last in fitting out two caravels early in 1498; but to accomplish this it was necessary for him, Viceroy as he was, to take much of the actual drudgery of the work upon himself, to go round to the storehouses and deal personally with the tradesmen. He speaks feelingly in a letter written long afterwards of his laborious quest of provisions on this occasion. The two vessels arrived in Hispaniola at the beginning of February, bearing to Bartholomew the royal confirmation of his appointment, which gave strength to his government at such a critical conjuncture that perhaps a few weeks of additional delay would have made reconstruction impossible.

Six more caravels, by assiduous toil, were ready at the end of May. Columbus was just about to set sail when a contemptible underling of Fonseca's colonial office, hoping to please his patron, ventured to crown a long series of petty annoyances by personal insolence. The admiral, forgetting old age and shattered health, chastised him on the spot. It may have been another error of judgment, for the wretched man had an official character, and Fonseca would be sure to take the retribution as an insult to himself; but even if this infliction of well-merited punishment was a

grave fault in diplomacy, the moral offence was surely a very venial one, and perhaps to Columbus it seemed more important to vindicate his honor and assert his power before his own retainers than to consider very nicely the effect of his act upon one who could scarcely become more bitterly hostile than he then was. Fonseca was certainly not the man to let slip such a golden opportunity, and Las Casas attributes the decline of the influence of Columbus at court to this incident, which was represented in dark colors when he was not present to defend himself.

The third voyage began on the 30th of May, 1498, under the invocation of the Blessed Trinity,\* and with a vow to give to the first new land the name of Trinidad. The avowed object from the first was to arrive at the mainland. Islands enough had been found already; it was time to think of continents, and Columbus, still irrepressible, was dreaming of discoveries which should throw into the shade every exploit except the imperishable glory of the first landing. From the Canary Islands he despatched three of the caravels straight to Hispaniola, under the command of Alonzo de Carvajal, an excellent officer, Pedro de Araña, uncle of the unfortunate Diego de Araña, and brother to Beatrix, and Juan Colom-

\* "Partí en nombre de la Santísima Trinidad, miercoles, 30 de mayo, de la villa de San Lucar" (Letter to the King and Queen. Navarrete, tom i.)

bo, a kinsman from Genoa. He himself sailed for the Cape de Verde Islands, to take in fresh supplies, intending thence to steer southwest till he had crossed the line, and then strike boldly west for any land which Providence might yield to his scrutiny. But a calm of eight days' duration, under an insufferable sun, which melted the tar, opened the seams, burst the casks, spoiled the provisions, and very nearly stifled the sailors, made it necessary to shorten the voyage, and to forego for that occasion the design of crossing the equator. When a breeze was given to their prayers they ran before it due west; but it soon became clear that the provisions would not last even for that shorter voyage, and that it was expedient to make for the nearest known land with all convenient haste. Columbus turned north for the Caribbee Islands, and on his way saw to the west three mountains united at the base, which he promptly christened Trinidad, according to his vow. He discerned in this coincidence a miraculous approval.\* At the "hour of Compline" on the 31st of July they reached the island, but found no anchorage till they had coasted some leagues. To the great delight of all, for they had reached their last cask in each of the ships, they met with abundance of pure water

\* "El presente atribuyó á un señalado beneficio de Dios; mirando como milagroso el tiempo, el modo y la vista de tres cumbres" (Munoz, "Historia del Nuevo Mundo," l. vi. § 23).

where first they went ashore. Footsteps and fishing implements showed that the land was inhabited, but the natives kept carefully out of sight on shore. When the coasting was resumed, twenty-four young men, armed with arrows and shields, followed the ships in a canoe. Columbus tried to encourage them, but they could not be induced to come closer, and some music which was meant to allure them was understood by them as a signal of battle. They immediately discharged their arrows. Two cross-bow shots dispersed them.

In these first days of August land was descried to the south. It was the first sight of "America." The part first seen was the delta of the Orinoco; the part first touched was the coast of Paria. The caravels were in the greatest danger of foundering as they passed through the terrible strait of the Serpent's Mouth, between Trinidad and the mainland. The natives of Paria were friendly, and the Spaniards obtained a great quantity of pearls from them. Very reluctantly Columbus abandoned this favorite coast; but his eyesight was failing, and he was suffering intensely from the gout, so that he says of himself that he was more exhausted than even after his Cuban exploration. The men, too, were eager to reach the colony, and he felt that his absence had been already dangerously prolonged. He had sought in vain an opening to the west, and found himself

compelled to encounter the foaming waters of the northern strait, more formidable even than the Serpent's Mouth had been, and named by him accordingly the Dragon's Mouth. It was the time of the river floods, and the contest between the fresh water and the ocean tide, seen for the first time, was truly appalling. However, the frail vessels passed safely through on the great river-wave, and "Columbus gave infinite thanks to the Lord." He saw the northern coast of Paria stretching away to the west, and mountains on the far horizon, which almost seemed to his imagination to beckon him forward; but he turned from the seductive shore and shaped his course resolutely for Hispaniola, meeting some new islands on the way.

Nothing had surprised him more in the recent explorations than the prevalence of fresh water, fit to drink, in the Gulf of Paria; and when he found leisure to consider the phenomenon, he seized upon the grand truth by a simple induction. No islands could hold rivers large enough to pour into the sea so vast a volume of water; therefore some portion at least of the land which they had seen \* to the south and west of Trinidad

\* Irving says: "In 1498 Columbus in his third voyage discovered the coast of Paria, on *terra firma*, which he at that time imagined to be a great island, but that a vast continent lay immediately adjacent" (Appendix to "Life of Columbus," n. ix.) He seems to have been misled by a name, which he gives erroneously, without mentioning his authority, for he observes:

belonged to the mainland. It has been received as an ascertained fact that Columbus died in the belief that he had discovered only the eastern extremity of Asia. Whether his later voyages in any way altered his earlier notions about Cuba it is not easy to determine, but we have his own words that this southern continent, whence flowed the great mass of water that sweetened the surrounding sea, was a land hitherto unheard of.\* He certainly would not have used such an expression of the Asiatic continent. One of two things should follow: either this southern continent, in his opinion, stood to Asia in much the same relation as Australia is now known to do, or all his previous ideas of Asia were revolutionized by finding this new continent.

Humboldt is severe upon the ridiculous notion

"Here he beheld two lofty capes of land opposite to each other, one on the island of Trinidad, the other to the west, on the long promontory of Paria, which stretches from the mainland and forms the northern side of the gulf, but which Columbus mistook for an island, and gave it the name of *Isla de Gracia*" ("Life of Columbus," bk. x. c. ii.) Irving fails to remark that Columbus tried in vain to find an opening between this cape and the coast of Paria, and that he in his own account invariably says *Tierra de Gracia*, *not* *Isla de Gracia*. See Martin Fernandez Navarrete, "*Tercer Viage de Cristóbal Colon*."

\* "*Torno á mi propósito de la tierra de Gracia y rio y lago que allí fallé, atan grande que mas se le puede llamar mar que lago . . . y digo que sino procede del Paraiso terrenal que viene este rio y procede de tierra infinita pues al Austro dela cual fasta agora no se habido noticia*" (Navarrete, "*Tercer Viage*"). These words of Columbus himself seem to prove that he recognized, some years before his death, the existence of a large continent which was not Asia.



that the earth was shaped like a pear; but Columbus takes some trouble to explain that he does not mean a pear of irregular shape, and if the illustration, even with his explanation, must still be deemed a little grotesque, he ought to receive credit notwithstanding for having detected the protuberance of the equator. Some other speculations which he made will be considered childish by all to whom the first chapters of Genesis are as a fairy tale. He thought that this more elevated region of the earth, with its serene sky and fruitful soil and mighty rivers, contained the lost earthly Paradise, "to which no man could ever arrive without the divine permission."

In the passage to Hispaniola he did not make sufficient allowance for the force of the Gulf Stream, and to his exceeding surprise he struck the island fifty leagues west of the point for which he was steering. Having sent a messenger overland, he sailed along the coast towards the new settlement which he had told Bartholomew to found on the southern coast near the mines of Hayna. Columbus was by this time quite wasted away with pain and anxiety, nearly blind, and yearning for comparative repose. He found only fresh cares and deeper sorrow, "the bread of bitterness" of which Jacques Ferrer had spoken.

Bartholomew hastened to meet him at sea. A strong affection united the two brothers. Writing a little before his death to his son Diego, Colum-

bus says: "To thy brother conduct thyself as the elder brother should unto the younger. Thou hast no other, and I praise God that this is such a one as thou dost need. Ten brothers would not be too many for thee. Never have I found a better friend than my brothers."\*

The state of the island at once drove away all thoughts of present repose. Only strong measures could avert total ruin. The adelantado had held his ground nobly, and had shown wonderful power and ability, but the difficulties which traitors and profligates accumulated round him were almost too much for human strength to surmount.

Till the royal appointment arrived at a late period in the strife, the enemies of Columbus affected to consider the adelantado an interloper, without authority from the crown. This pretence, for it was nothing more, weakened his position by giving to open rebellion a thin disguise of resistance to usurpation and oppression.

And it must be admitted that there was much in the government of the two brothers little calculated to conciliate men who in too many cases were steeped in iniquity. We are tempted in the course of Irving's narrative to ask from time to time if, amid all the inextricable confusion caused by Spanish profligacy and Indian desperation, we

\* Irving's "Life of Columbus," bk. xviii. c. iii.

can discern in the commander-in-chief any positive indications of higher graces than mere superiority of intelligence or intense rectitude of purpose. It would not be right to complain of a prince for being too great a saint, but there can be no doubt that sanctity is sometimes an obstacle to immediate success. If Columbus could have stifled the voice of his conscience, and while yet in the first flush of his triumph and the plenitude of his power could have consented to sacrifice the poor Indians, and could have given free leave from the beginning to the Spanish colonists to enter upon that course of conquest which their immorality soon made a necessity of self-defence, the Indians could scarcely have been worse off than they actually became, and Columbus would have earned a popularity which might have made it possible to exercise some general control and to repress more startling excesses. But this was just what Columbus could not do. He could not forget his solicitude for the salvation of souls; he could not purchase popularity by allowing reprobates to indulge their wicked desires, to the ruin in soul and body of those he came to save; he could not prefer temporal profit and personal ease to the interests of his divine Master; he could not sanction or connive at conduct which was a libel on the Gospel, and made it almost impossible to Christianize the islanders—much in the same way as the reputed atheism of Englishmen in India has

made it next to impossible ever to convert the native population. Above and beyond all other considerations ever present to the mind of Columbus was the spreading of the faith and the preparation of the natives for the grace of baptism. He found himself, therefore, immediately and persistently at cross purposes with men whose chief desire was to be rich and to enjoy themselves—selfish, ambitious, vindictive, and incredibly short-sighted. He ought, perhaps, to have understood better the hopelessness of the attempt to force men to be good by disciplinary enactments, and he ought, perhaps, to have been willing on occasion to permit a lesser evil in order to escape a greater; but he seemed unable to fathom the lower depths of depravity, and he too easily trusted men who only wanted the opportunity to show their darker nature. “The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.”

He found a conflagration raging. The direct object of this paper seems to require a circumstantial account of its origin. When he departed with Aguado, the Indians had been awed into submission, and all the island had been subjected to tribute except the western principality of Xaragua, governed by the cacique Behechio, whose accomplished and really admirable sister, Anacaona, widow of Caonabo, had thrown herself upon his protection. It is pleasant to read of the

chivalrous reverence with which she was treated. The adelantado marched out to reduce the sole remaining province, and Behechio advanced with forty thousand men to meet him; but if he had contemplated resistance, he quickly changed his mind, and yielding to the prayers of his sister, who had never shared her husband's hostility to the Spaniards, he gave a hearty welcome to his visitors. Seven years later Xaragua was the scene of a massacre as perfidious as that of Glencoe, and more cruel, and Anacaona was carried off in chains and hanged by order of the successor of Columbus. Behechio's countenance fell when he received intimation that tribute must be paid, for there was very little gold in his district, and he knew that the search for it would entail severe labor. With great judgment and humanity the adelantado at once commuted the requisition of gold into an equivalent of cotton, hemp, and cassava bread, an accommodation which Behechio accepted not only readily but gratefully. This incident shows how easily the natives could have been converted into loyal subjects if they had been treated with the kindness and consideration and Christian charity which Columbus practised and prescribed.

Niño's shipload of supplies, which, by fraudulent transactions, was scandalously incomplete at starting, and had been further damaged at sea, scarcely afforded perceptible relief, and scarcity

of provisions kept the colonists at the new southern port of San Domingo in a state of chronic irritation. The governor tried to occupy them with public works. A dangerous insurrection broke out among the natives, headed by Guarionex, cacique of the Vega, who had suffered grievous wrong. The revolt was suppressed almost without bloodshed by the sagacious adelantado, who surprised in the night time and carried away captive fourteen caciques. He ordered two of them, who had forced Guarionex to take up arms, to be put to death, but with great generosity he restored Guarionex to liberty, finding an excuse for his conduct in the treatment which he had endured; and he condemned to death the Spaniard who had abused the cacique's hospitality, though he afterwards remitted the sentence.

When he went shortly after this to collect the tribute in Xaragua, leaving Don Diego in command, Francis Roldan, the chief judge of the island, who had learned from Aguado to treat his benefactor with contempt, and proclaimed that his office made him independent of all insular authority, thought it a favorable opportunity to raise the standard of revolt. He was a formidable rebel, for to vile ingratitude, and, when it served his purpose, degrading servility, he joined the fearless courage which, in many Spaniards of that time, seems the one redeeming trait. He was a bold, bad man, as brave as Ojéda, and

troubled by no inconvenient scruples. He never allowed a thought of duty or conscience or humanity to interfere with his schemes of ambition. A pretext was all he wanted, and it was soon found; for Diego, knowing that mischief was stirring, thought it dangerous to leave the caravel from Xaragua riding at anchor, and caused it to be drawn ashore. This was represented by Roldan as an insult and an injury. These Genoese upstarts, according to him, not only tyrannized over Spanish nobles, but wanted to cut them off from all redress. Diego tried to find legitimate employment for the mutinous spirits, and having commissioned Roldan to collect tribute in the Vega, put forty men at his disposal.

The crafty leader, after securing to his interests nearly all his little troop, and dismissing the refractory remnant, gladly marched off to the Vega, where he made common cause with the aggrieved caciques. He found Don Bartholomew in power on his return, and receiving from him a very curt refusal to an insolent demand that the ship should be launched, he seceded with seventy men, and endeavored to win over the veteran commander of Fort Concepcion, but Miguel Ballester was a good man and a stanch soldier. Roldan succeeded only too well in securing many followers by promises of full freedom from all disagreeable restraints of law, and Don Bartholomew, who had marched to the relief of Fort Concepcion, and



Don Diego in Isabella, did not know how far they could trust their troops. The rebels felt their strength increasing from day to day, and grew more insolent and daring, threatening Fort Concepcion with regular siege; but just when the prospect was most gloomy, on the 3d of February, 1498, the two precursor caravels under Coronal came to support legitimate authority. Roldan fomented a fresh revolt of Guarionex, but this the adelantado promptly suppressed, once more refusing to take the life of Guarionex, whom he was content to detain in prison. It was the policy of Roldan and his followers to represent themselves to the Indians as their protectors, and they even imposed upon Anacaona, and being graciously received in Xaragua, tried to make the most of their brief season of impunity. The three caravels which Columbus had detached from his squadron at the Canaries arrived off Xaragua, and Roldan had the address to seduce some of the men, and to obtain supplies. The commanders, however, soon found out the truth, and while Carvajal stayed behind to try to bring Roldan back to his allegiance, the other two sailed for San Domingo. Roldan began to be anxious to escape from his dangerous position, and by an ingenious distinction declared that he was in arms not against the admiral, but against Don Bartholomew, and that when the admiral returned he would submit. Columbus on his arrival empow-

ered Miguel Ballester to treat with the rebels, who came in a tumultuary force to the Vega, ostensibly to state their grievances. They laughed at the offer of pardon, for the very offering of it was a sign of weakness. No one knew this better than Columbus himself, but a review of his troops had shown him unmistakably that he could not risk a battle. Roldan seems to have been favorably impressed by an affectionate letter from Columbus, recalling him to his duty ; but he was no longer his own master, and had to consider the wishes of the turbulent band, who had only obeyed him as long as he gave them their own way.

Columbus delayed some caravels which were on the point of starting, in the hope of being able to induce some of the malcontents to embark. He wrote to the sovereigns to tell them of the deplorable state of the island, and to complain of the men who had brought it about, and he asked permission in the dearth of laborers to employ for two years longer the forced service of prisoners of war. This unlucky suggestion displeased Isabella much, for it came to give color to the falsehood industriously circulated by Fonseca's faction that Columbus and his brothers were the obstinate oppressors of the natives, compassion for whose unmerited sufferings was among the motives of the late insurrection. The best proof that the assertion was pure calumny is found in

the conduct of such men as Alonzo de Ojéda, shortly to be noticed, for we learn therefrom how Fonseca could excuse in his friends the open traffic in slaves shamelessly captured without a shadow of right, while he was loud in his condemnation of Columbus for being willing to enslave prisoners of war.

Failing in his endeavor to persuade the insurgents to depart from the island, Columbus was reduced to the most humiliating concessions. He had among other things to reinstate Roldan in his office of chief judge. The storm-clouds still gathered above him. A new insurrection of the natives called the adelantado from his side. Word was brought that Ojéda, once his loyal officer, now an independent explorer and slave-merchant, furnished by Fonseca in violation of confidence and honor, with the latest chart of the Gulf of Paria, had landed on the island with hostile intentions, and had the effrontery to claim as from the crown the government of the colony; and, worst of all, a letter came from the sovereigns showing plainly that his truthful narrative had not prevailed against the slanders of men who were on the spot and could watch their opportunity. He was, in his own words, "absent, envied, and a foreigner in the land."

His heart sank within him. Such fierce trials following close upon the exhaustion of a long voyage, and accompanied by sickness and bodily

pain, would have subdued a less resolute spirit long before. It was Christmas day, 1499. In his nervous prostration he was seized with a sudden dread of assassination, certainly not groundless considering the character of his assailants, and was strongly tempted to take flight with his brothers from the island. Then he heard, or fancied that he heard, a voice saying to him: "Man of little faith, fear not, it is I."

He recovered confidence, and the state of things rapidly mended. Roldan, whom from sheer necessity he sent to encounter Ojéda, entered warmly into his new mission, and seemed to find a pleasure in exerting for the defence of law and order all the vigor and courage and address which had given such force to his rebellion. He was soon at open war with his former followers, but, with Roldan changed from an enemy to a friend, Columbus was able to strike terror once more. Adrian de Moxica, convicted of conspiracy to assassinate both Roldan and Columbus, was captured with his companions by Roldan, who sent a messenger to Fort Concepcion, where Columbus then was, to learn his pleasure with regard to the prisoners. Columbus with tears signed the order for the execution of Moxica, and the rest were condemned to exile or imprisonment. Led out to execution on the ramparts at San Domingo, the wretched man displayed the most abject terror, and, to gain a little time, refused

to make his confession, till at last Roldan lost all patience and ordered him to be hanged from the battlement.\*

Hispaniola was fast recovering its prosperity, and Columbus had sent a long and careful account of all the disturbances to the sovereigns, and was once more beginning to promise himself a season of repose, when Francis Bobadilla arrived as royal commissioner to enquire into the state of the colony. He came with the fullest powers, but these were not to be used, or even made known, except in emergency. He was to examine into the conduct of the admiral, and to supersede him if he found him really guilty. Ferdinand deserves the credit of this strange device, which promoted impartial judicial enquiry by making it the immediate interest of the judge to condemn the accused. Bobadilla, like Aguado, was weak and vain. He came with his mind made up. Columbus was prejudged, and confirmation of his guilt was all the commissary cared to have. He was provided with three letters of carefully graduated intensity, the most imperious of which commanded Columbus in the name of the sovereigns to deliver up all fortresses and ships; and besides these let-

\* Irving, following Herrera, wrongly attributes this execution without the Sacraments to Columbus, who, by his own account, was absent on the occasion, and hearing afterwards of Roldan's unseemly haste, was filled with grief.

ters he was the bearer of a brief but significant missive to the admiral. Bobadilla did not meet with ready submission, and exhausted his own three letters before he could persuade Don Diego, who was in command at St. Domingo in the absence of the admiral at Fort Concepcion, that he was not an audacious adventurer like Ojéda, whose similar claims were still fresh in the memory of all. Columbus, to whom the lightest command of the sovereigns had ever been a law, was painfully embarrassed; for, though it seemed that Bobadilla had been really despatched by the sovereigns, the amazing insolence of his behavior made it natural to suppose that, like Aguado, he had lost his self-possession, and was disposed to exaggerate his powers. When he saw with his own eyes the cruel little note which, without one word of regret or one soothing phrase, cancelled the rights secured by solemn treaty to him and his heirs, he yielded at once to Bobadilla's peremptory summons. The letter ran:

"Don Christopher Colon, our admiral of the ocean sea, we have charged the Commander Francis de Bobadilla, bearer of these presents, to make known to you in our name certain matters with which he is entrusted. We pray you to yield to him faith and credit, and to act accordingly."

Bobadilla's first act on arriving had been to set free the state prisoners. He then promised redress of all grievances, and having established

himself in the house of the late Viceroy, spoke of him with contempt on every occasion, and declared himself empowered to punish him.

Columbus came humbly in his Franciscan dress with his breviary in his hand, and he and Don Diego were immediately thrown into chains and confined in separate caravels. The outrage was so glaring that it was not easy to find any one willing to incur the infamy of fastening the chains upon the discoverer of the New World. Bobadilla, being very much afraid of the gallant adelantado, who was with some troops in Xaragua, had the meanness to ask the injured admiral to write to his brother. Columbus persuaded him to come at once and surrender himself to legitimate authority. He obeyed, of course, and was forthwith put into irons on a third caravel. Columbus was, moreover, subjected to actual ill-treatment. Though in such weak health, he was deprived of a part of his clothing, and was insufficiently fed.

Accusations poured in as fast as even Bobadilla himself could wish. Every ignoble wretch had something to say against Columbus, either to gratify some personal pique or to please the new governor. The judicial induction was of the simplest. Crimes without number or measure had too truly been committed. Columbus and his brothers, directly or indirectly, had caused them all, for they had all occurred under their adminis-



tration. Therefore Columbus and his brothers were responsible, and no punishment could equal their deserts. A huge budget of misdeeds was soon collected (of every kind *save one*, let it be said once more), and Bobadilla terminated his enquiry. The sentence had yet to be pronounced. A man who had shown himself capable of going as far as Bobadilla had gone might be expected to go a little farther, and Columbus prepared for death.\*

The young Alonzo de Vallejo, a friend of Fonseca, but also a friend of Las Casas, came with a guard of soldiers. Columbus thought that they had come to conduct him to the scaffold. "Vallejo, where are you taking me?" "I have to take your excellency on board the *Gorda*, which starts at once." Columbus thought he was humanely concealing the truth. "Vallejo, is it as you say?" †

The three brothers being all on board the *Gorda* shackled like malefactors, the captain put to sea at the beginning of October, 1500. The passage was short and easy. Vallejo felt deep sympathy

\* Balbao, the discoverer of the Pacific, perhaps after Columbus the most loyal and virtuous of the great navigators, was actually put to death in 1517 by Pedrarias Davila, a royal commissioner sent out by Fonseca. He was just starting with four ships to sail in the direction of Peru, and anticipate the achievement of Pizarro, when he was recalled, and, after a mock trial, executed by his worthless rival (Robertson, "History of America," bk. iii. an. 1517).

† Las Casas, "Historia de las Indias," bk. i. c. clxxx.

for his noble prisoners, and they were no sooner fairly at sea, than he respectfully proposed to release Columbus from personal restraint, but he would not hear of it. It was in the name of his sovereigns that he had been chained, and he would not permit any surreptitious alleviation of his sufferings. Wasted by disease and acute pain, worn out by labor which never brought repose, accused of causing evils which he had done his best to prevent, tortured by the thought that the poor Indians, whose souls he would have poured out his life-blood to save, were being taught the vices of Christians instead of the doctrines of Christianity, and instead of being led by the hand to the waters of baptism were being driven farther away from the love of Jesus Christ and the hope of heaven, knowing in the bitterness of his soul that the testimony of lazy vagabonds and convicted robbers was preferred to his, wounded to the heart by the defection of those who should have been most loyal, and forsaken at last even by Isabella the Catholic, his spirit was still unbroken, and he was as great in the day of adversity as he had been in the day of exaltation.

He solaced his confinement on the voyage by writing to the intimate friend of Isabella, Doña Juana de la Torre, nurse of Prince Juan. One passage must be quoted, for it shows his own unshaken faith in his spiritual mission, and the source of his serenity in the complete assurance

that the persecution which had fallen upon him was only an episode of the long conflict between "the world" and Christ:

"If it is a new thing for me to complain of the world, at least there is nothing new in its mode of treating me. It has forced me a thousand times to join battle, and I have always stood my ground till now, when neither good sword nor wise counsel can help me. It has cruelly flung me down. . . . The hope in Him who made us all sustains me: his aid is ever near. Not long since, when I was in still deeper dejection, he raised me up with his all-powerful arm, saying to me, 'O man of little faith, arise! it is I, fear not!' . . . God made me his envoy to the new heaven and the new earth, of which he spoke in the Apocalypse by the mouth of St. John, after having spoken of them by the mouth of Isaias, and he made known to me the place where they were to be found. All were incredulous. But the Lord gave to my sovereign lady, the Queen, the spirit of understanding, endowed her with the courage needed, and bestowed the whole inheritance on her, his daughter well-beloved."

This letter was read to Isabella at Granada before the portentous researches of Bobadilla came to hand. She at least had never meant that her old friend should be so treated, and in indignant haste she despatched a courier to Cadiz to bid the magistrate strike off his chains. She sent also

a letter to Columbus, signed by herself and Ferdinand, deploring the shameful misconstruction of the royal orders, and inviting him to court at once. His enemies had in their blind malice outstepped the limits of discretion, for the enormity of the outrage spoke to the hearts of all honest men and made them execrate the persecutors who had contrived it. The third homeward voyage of Columbus from the New World, which he had given to ungrateful Spain, remains still one of the lessons of history.

The cold-hearted Ferdinand was alarmed. The name of Christopher Columbus was already known in every land, and the sovereigns would have to answer before the Europe of that day, and at the bar of history, for what, without some elaborate exculpation, would certainly be taken as an instance of ingratitude almost without parallel. Ferdinand eagerly disowned the acts of his subordinates, but his subsequent conduct shows that it was only their incautious zeal which he really resented.

When Bobadilla's informations were presented for perusal, they also by their inordinateness conveyed an impression contrary to the intention of the framers of them. Columbus and his brothers were received at court with every demonstration of respect, and in a solemn audience the sovereigns strove to make public reparation. A few days later the queen admitted him to a private in-

terview, and her tears flowed in abundance. That was a reparation worthy of acceptance, and to know that Isabella had been undeceived was the greatest earthly consolation in the gift of heaven. She promised adequate redress, restoration to office, reinstatement in all rights and privileges, the immediate recall of Bobadilla, and the repeal of all his senseless innovations, which in a few months of pompous misrule, based upon the desire to win the favor of the colonists by inviting them to contrast the present indulgence with former severity of discipline, had effectually dissipated the returning prosperity of Hispaniola. The reappointment of Columbus to the government of the colony was to be delayed a short time as a matter of prudence, and a provisional commandant sent out. Isabella, we cannot doubt, honestly intended to carry out her promises, but Ferdinand had fully made up his mind that Columbus should not go back to Hispaniola, if he could prevent it. The island had not yet been made profitable to his treasury ; for that at least, he thought, Columbus surely was to blame.





## CHAPTER V.

COLUMBUS now drew up a formal complaint against Bobadilla, exposing the vices of his administration, and in a separate document he presented the justification in detail of his own conduct and that of his brothers. He reminds the Council of State of his great services and of the strange recompense which he had received for them; he adjures them as good Christians to examine into the terms of his appointment, which had received such solemn sanction; to reflect how he, a foreigner, had given his service to Spain with such hearty good-will that he has been almost always at a distance from wife and children for years; and then he prays them to observe that his devotedness has been rewarded in the decline of life by the spoliation of all things. He pleaded his own cause with such force of argument that the council and the sovereigns again, as formerly, approved of all his suggestions for the government of the colony, and cancelled the contrary enactments of his weak-

mind successor, who had stooped so low as to encourage by his own words extortion and criminal excess, reminding his dependents that they would do well to make use of their present opportunities.

This is the place to vindicate the memory of Columbus from some of the very many false accusations brought against him. The charge of cruelty does not merit special refutation, for his whole career disproves it. If it did need special refutation, we might rest content with the single remark that the most flagrant instance of cruelty adduced by his enemies was the execution of Adrian de Moxica, of which an account has been already given.

The celebrated *repartimientos* require a few words of explanation. It may be premised that upon no single point does the conduct of Columbus contrast more favorably with that of his successors. Irving, speaking of the service of Indians permitted in the treaty which was patched up with Roldan, the self-styled protector of the natives, says:

“This, as has been observed, was the commencement of the disastrous system of *repartimientos*, or distributions of the Indians. When Bobadilla administered the government, he constrained the caciques to furnish a certain number of Indians to each Spaniard, for the purpose of working the mines, where they were employed



like beasts of burden" (Irving's "Life of Columbus," bk. xvii. c. i.)

Prescott says:

"In this desperate rebellion (of Roldan) all the interests of the community were neglected. The mines, which were just beginning to yield a golden harvest, remained unwrought. The unfortunate natives were subjected to the most inhuman oppression. . . . The admiral exhausted art, negotiation, entreaty, force, and succeeded at last in patching up a specious reconciliation by such concessions as essentially impaired his own authority. Among these was the grant of large tracts of land to the rebels, with permission to the proprietor to employ an allotted number of the natives in its cultivation. This was the origin of the celebrated system of *repartimientos*, which subsequently led to the foulest abuses that ever disgraced humanity" (Prescott, "Ferdinand and Isabella," vol. ii. p. 2, c. viii.)

It is true that the *repartimientos* sprang from the feudal system which Columbus established, but they sprang from it as a perversion, not as a development. He never would consent to enslave an unoffending Indian, and, though he sufficiently shared the ideas of his time to believe that enemies taken with arms in their hands forfeited their right of freedom, he himself personally did not possess one slave, whilst Fonseca, with all his virtuous declaiming, possessed two hun-

dred.\* What he did permit was: first, the forced labor of prisoners of war; and secondly, the commutation of tribute in gold or in produce into labor to be furnished by the caciques, who were to order their subjects to help in the public works for one or two days in the week, and thus, remaining all the time free subjects of their own native princes, to pay in labor, instead of in the produce of labor, the taxes which these princes had a right to claim. The arrangement as it was made and understood by Columbus constituted no infringement of personal liberty. The *repartimientos*, on the other hand, were distributions of Indians, simply as Indians, without any pretence of either penal servitude or feudal service, and they were the invention not of Columbus the accused, but of Bobadilla the accuser.†

He has been accused of incapacity for government, but the proofs are not satisfactory. Success and failure are not infallible indications of virtue, and if they were, Columbus might bear even that test, for with the same unmanageable materials his successors failed more fatally than he. Bobadilla was carrying all things to destruction when his short reign terminated. Ovando kept the Spaniards in some kind of order, but it was by

\* Le Père Charlevoix, "Histoire de St. Dominique," l. v. p. 337, cited by M. Roselly de Lorgues.

† See "Christophe Colomb," t. ii. p. 135.

ruthlessly sacrificing the Indians. He has been blamed for choosing bad officers, as, for example, Pedro Margarite and Roldan, betraying thereby ignorance of character. What then shall we say of Ferdinand and Isabella, who chose Aguado and Bobadilla and Ovando, Fonseca and Soria? Even the most questionable of all his public acts, the transportation of criminals to the colony, had large excuse in the crying necessities of the occasion. Few men indeed, perhaps only saints, have escaped like Columbus with unwounded conscience from such tumultuous scenes.

Nicolas Ovando, commander of Lares, was appointed provisional governor of the islands and continent. He seemed a man well suited for high office, and enjoyed the esteem of all parties, the king and queen and Fonseca included. His fleet was soon ready, and was larger than any that had been given to Columbus, consisting of thirty-two ships. It is scarcely rash to surmise that Ferdinand would not have provided so magnificent a convoy if the governor himself had been starting instead of his substitute, as Ovando was officially announced to be.

Columbus found at last the rest for which he had sighed so long. That third voyage, which had terminated to all outward seeming most disastrously, had really more than answered all his prayers. He had sailed in search of Asia, and had found America. To him who had been

chosen to discover the first land in the West, had been granted also the first sight of the great continent, though this was in 1498, and already in 1495\* the royal sanction had been given to private adventure. It is strange that in those three years no bold mariner was able to wrest from Columbus that secondary glory.†

He was perfectly aware of the great results which he had achieved, and his active and vigorous mind, no longer occupied with ten thousand petty details of anxious government, reverted at once to the master-thought which gave epic unity to his entire career, and in deep meditation in the Franciscan convents at Granada and Zubia he traced the connection, to him so natural and so intimate, between the discovery of new nations and the reconquest of Jerusalem. He had strongly grasped the fundamental truth that the actions of men have their meaning and value from reference to the life of God incarnate. The only thing worthy of Christian ambition was to spread the kingdom of Christ. Dynastic wars were not worth one thought; but when it was proposed to rescue the holy places from the infidel, a Christian, Columbus supposed, might well be glad to spend money and labor and life. He was devoured with the zeal of God's house. He saw in

\* Irving's "Life of Columbus," bk. xiv. c. ii.

† Amerigo Vespucci was with Ojéda when by the help of the charts of Columbus he steered for Paria in 1499.

his own name the "Christ-bearer," a symbol of his work. Whether he strove to extend the boundaries of the Church, or to restore to the Church her former possessions, whether he labored to convert poor ignorant pagans to the knowledge of Christ, or to wrest from obstinate enemies the objects of Christian reverence, he was always thinking how to advance the cause of him whom in more than name he carried. That this is no fancy of his Catholic admirers his own writings abundantly prove. The wealth of the Indies, to follow his train of thought, would ensure the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre; the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre would increase charity, and send evangelists to the Indies. Distant nations must be added to the fold, and Christians must be free once more to worship Christ at Bethlehem and Calvary. The grand idea which filled the mind and claimed the whole soul of Columbus was to make a highway round the earth, and bring the nations in willing homage to the feet of Jesus Christ, reigning once more in Jerusalem of the Christians.

He could not yet march against the Moslem, but he could continue his progress round the world; and thus very shortly we find him again, before he had recruited his strength, making application to the sovereigns to be sent on a fresh expedition. The indomitable old man would rather die in harness than lead an idle life. Pro-

testant historians show their inability to appreciate that profoundly religious character which they universally ascribe to Columbus, when they can only see in this desire of a fourth voyage the love of glory and the fear of being eclipsed by rival navigators. He himself solemnly asserts that these were not his motives, and he deserves to be believed. He spent nine months in Granada in trying in vain to obtain payment of arrears for himself and those dependent upon him. Everywhere he obtained ready promises, but Ferdinand's indifference and Fonseca's covert opposition made the actual recovery of money a very tedious business, for he did not choose to tease his royal mistress with memorials of private grievances. In his too plentiful leisure moments he fed his enthusiasm upon the prophecies of Holy Writ, and composed a treatise, of which the rough and mutilated sketch (or caricature), alone preserved till now, can give no real idea. Humboldt terms the work itself, which he never saw, "extravagant," but it would be interesting to know in what light he regarded the prophecies themselves.

In the course of his meditations another great intuition flashed upon the mind of Columbus. His conclusions were sometimes more correct than his premises. The great current setting westward from the Gulf of Paria must find an outlet somewhere, he supposed to the west, and

Irving says that he had fixed in his mind the region of the Isthmus of Darien for the probable locality. He was mistaken, as it happened, but the guess ran strangely near the truth. It was to find this strait, and having passed through it, to continue his voyage round the world, that he now proposed to resume the thread of his discoveries. The design found much favor with Ferdinand, for he envied Portugal her lucrative Asiatic expeditions. Columbus thoroughly distrusted Ferdinand, and felt that in the event of Isabella's death all his past services would be forgotten, and all solemn conventions would be disregarded, as far at least as public opinion might permit; and that if, as was not improbable, he himself should lose his life on this voyage, his children, with a crowd of bitter enemies of their father round them, would be defrauded of their rights, and that in consequence his grand designs for the service of the Church would perish with himself. He took the most extraordinary precautions. He was, as we have seen, in actual poverty at this time, living upon his "expectations" of justice and his claims of unpaid revenue. He wrote an anxious letter to the sovereigns, recommending to them his children and his brothers after his death. His evident solicitude gave real pain to Isabella, and once more all his rights were solemnly guaranteed by a joint letter of the sovereigns. Even this could not calm his fears. Isa-



bella's protestations were superfluous, Ferdinand's worthless. Columbus consigned a copy of all the rights conceded to himself and his heirs to the care of the Genoese Ambassador, and asked him to let his eldest son Diego know where it was to be found. Another copy he left with the Franciscans, and another with the monks of St. Jerome. He drew up, moreover, written instructions to help Diego in making good his claims, which were sure to be contested. He also wrote to the Holy Father at this time, expressing his grief at having been unable to relate to him with his own lips the story of the enterprise, originally undertaken and consistently prosecuted for the glory of God and the diffusion of the faith. He speaks, of course, of the Holy Sepulchre, and is sure that Satan is to blame for the thwarting of his pious purpose, which will require money and power, and he now possessed neither.

He prayed that his son Fernando might be permitted to accompany him on the expedition, and Isabella gave the boy a naval commission. Bartholomew was at first disposed to hold back. Good Christian though he was, he thought that the ill-usage which they had experienced went beyond human endurance, and he was in no mood to continue to serve ungrateful Spain. But the sight of his noble brother, still serene and brave, untamed by disappointment, unconquered by opposition, faithful to the end, made him ashamed

of his weakness. He would not let his brother go alone, just when most he needed the help of a strong arm and a loving heart. Don Diego obeyed another vocation. He had led in all the turmoil of Hispaniola a life worthy of the most sacred calling, and he now recognized the will of God, and began his studies for the priesthood.

Columbus proposed to circumnavigate the globe, and demanded four vessels and provisions for two years. He started on the 9th of May, 1502, and intended to sail to Jamaica on his way to the imaginary strait. He had asked permission to call at Hispaniola, but had been forbidden to do so. The prohibition seems to have been reasonable, for Ovando had only just arrived, and the presence of Columbus at such a conjuncture would be sure to create fresh difficulties. The passage was most prosperous, and in sixteen days after leaving the Canaries they arrived at the Caribbee Islands. One of the four vessels had proved upon trial manifestly unfit for the long voyage which was in contemplation, and Columbus saw no other course in the emergency but to beg Ovando to give him another in exchange out of the large fleet at his disposal. He felt sure that the unforeseen necessity would justify, in the opinion of the sovereigns, this infringement of their orders. As he approached San Domingo, another more imperious reason forced him to appeal to Ovando.

He was without an equal in his power of reading the signs of the weather, and though to an ordinary observer there seemed no cause of apprehension, he knew that a storm was coming. He sent the captain of the faulty ship to try to make his own bargain with the governor, and at the same time to ask for shelter in the approaching storm. Ovando, acting upon orders, returned a flat refusal. There is not sufficient reason for accusing him of acting with cruelty on this occasion, for he never meant to refuse shelter in a storm. His fault was that he paid so little deference to the opinion of a man who, even if his tried skill could not win faith for his prophecy, still for his great achievements deserved at least a respectful hearing.

Of the fleet which had escorted Ovando, eighteen ships were on the point of returning to Spain. The shelter which a public enemy might have claimed had been denied to Columbus in the island which he had given to Spain, and of which he was still virtually the governor, according to the repeated assurance of the sovereigns, for Ovando was, in a curious fashion certainly, only holding it in trust for him ; yet, smarting as he must have been under the injurious and insulting reply, he sent again to beg Ovando at least to look to the safety of his own fleet, and to retard its departure for a week. Some derided his fears, others pretended to think that the storm was a

cunning invention. The fleet put to sea. Only one ship, the smallest and the worst prepared, to which had been confided a portion of the revenue due to Columbus, reached Spain; two or three ships put back disabled into port, and all the others foundered in the storm. Roldan and Bobadilla went down with poor Guarionex. An immense sum of ill-gotten gold, which was meant to cover a multitude of sins before Ferdinand's tribunal, would not plead Bobadilla's cause so well before the judgment-seat of God.

Columbus put the ship which, from its condition, was in the greatest danger under the skilled command of Don Bartholomew, and then ran for a little haven on the coast. The storm broke with ungovernable fury; the ships were separated. Columbus kept under shelter; the other captains would not trust themselves near the shore. They gave themselves up for lost, but though they met the full fury of the storm, by good seamanship and the blessing of Heaven they carried their ships safely through. The admiral's own ship received no damage of any kind. This complete destruction of a noble fleet, with the very marked exception of one ship, and the preservation, as complete as it was beyond all possible expectation, of the four caravels which had been left to face the storm as best they might, may, no doubt, have been only a freak of the unruly elements; but it looks exceedingly like a

significant lesson to those whom it most concerned—a judgment to the rebels, a warning to the governor, an encouragement to the much-persecuted tertiary of St. Francis. Besides, the prediction was really very surprising. With all the improved weather-wisdom of our times, not many men with reputations to lose would have spoken as confidently as Columbus did, some days beforehand, of a storm of which to the uninitiated no symptoms whatever had then appeared.

The four caravels, when the storm subsided, lingered for a few days on the coast of Hispaniola. The men required rest, and three of the vessels had been severely strained. The crews, who had murmured against Columbus when on his account they saw themselves driven from harbor to perish at sea, now felt themselves for his sake under the special protection of heaven, and were nothing loth to continue the voyage. When the sea was calm they steered towards Jamaica, but were carried by the currents along the south of Cuba, and Columbus resolved without loss of time to bend his course to the strait which he expected to find. From that time forward it was one long battle with winds and waves. Old age was beginning to make itself felt, and the admiral became very ill; but full of the sense of his deep responsibility, he had his bed placed in a house on deck, from which he could direct the course and super-

intend all arrangements which the public safety required.

After much beating about, the little fleet arrived at the island of Guanajà, near the coast of Honduras. A large canoe, probably from Yucatan, arrived at the same time, rowed by twenty-five Indians, and carrying a cacique with his family, and a valuable cargo consisting of natural products and various articles of skilful workmanship. These visitors from the mainland showed no fear of the Spaniards. The construction of the canoe, the character of the cargo, the behavior of the men manifested a higher order of intelligence and civilization than had been yet seen in any native tribe of the New World. Columbus by his interpreter made many enquiries, and was deeply interested in the account he received of the great and rich country to the west; but not even that golden prize could tempt him to renounce the predetermined object of his voyage, and surrender so soon his search after the all-important strait which was to disclose to Spain a pathway round the world, and give a suitable completeness to his own heaven-appointed work. Irving says: "Within a day or two he would have arrived at Yucatan; the discovery of Mexico and the other opulent countries of New Spain would have necessarily followed; the Southern Ocean would have been disclosed to him, and a succession of splendid discoveries would have

shed fresh glory on his declining age, instead of its sinking amidst gloom, neglect, and disappointment." \*

All this might have been had God so willed; but if once we give free scope to conjecture, we ought to admit into our calculations the possibility of unfavorable results. The ships might not have reached Yucatan at all; either in going or returning the sickly crews, in their crazy skiffs, might have perished on the way; or they might have failed to penetrate far into the interior, and the Southern Ocean and the Empire of Mexico might not have been known a day sooner for all the discovery of Yucatan, or, in fine, Columbus might have died, for he was very ill.

Be that as it may, Columbus steered south for the nearest mainland at Cape Honduras. He was himself unable to move, but as it was Sunday, and the eve of the Feast of the Assumption, the adelantado and the captains and many of the men went ashore to hear Mass.† Then followed a weary struggle against headwinds and contrary currents, with continual rain and water-spouts, and such dreadful lightning that death and the end of the world were in the thoughts of

\* "Life of Columbus," bk. xv. c. ii.

† The first Mass on the mainland was said on the coast of Paria in the previous voyage. The honor of having planted the first cross in the New World, by which possibly the mainland of America is meant, is claimed for a Father of the Order of Mercy (S. Mariæ de Mercede Captivorum).



all. Father Alexander, a Franciscan, the only priest, administered the sacraments to all on the same ship with him, and in the other ships the men made their confessions to one another, and waited for death.\* Columbus says that the stoutest hearts quailed, and that he had never known a tempest so violent and so long enduring, and that in sixty days they had advanced only seventy leagues. He felt his own end approaching, and was distressed to think that he was directly responsible for the death of his brother and his son, whom he had persuaded to bear him company. At last he arrived at the point where the coast bends south, and a short respite of fair wind and clear sky was granted. After running down the Mosquito Coast, and discovering the great wealth of Veragua, and losing a boat with its crew, he was painfully toiling along the Isthmus of Panama against a contrary wind.

He had now passed the spot where, by his calculations, the great strait ought to have been found. He had persevered in his gallant effort till he saw that he was in error, and as he could not measure the extent of his error, and thought that possibly the strait might be still very far away, it seemed to him wise to relinquish a

\*“ For eighty-eight days the dreadful tempest never left me: my people were very sickly, all contrite for their sins, and many with promises to enter religion, and not one without vows of pilgrimage and the like ” (Navarrete, “ Letter to the Sovereigns ”).

search which neither ships nor men were in condition to carry out safely, and retracing his course to explore the rich province of Veragua. He had scarcely changed his route when a wind from the west, which they had so long sighed for, came, as if on purpose to dispute their passage.

Irving mentions the incident of a waterspout which the sailors fancied they had averted by reciting the Gospel of St. John. Las Casas says nothing about the prayers of the sailors, but he says that the admiral made the sign of the cross with his sword, repeating with loud voice the opening sentences of the Gospel of St. John, and that the waterspout, which was coming straight towards them, turned aside.

On the 6th of January, 1503, the caravels arrived at the river Belen in Veragua on their return, having spent a month in advancing thirty leagues along the Coast of Contradiction. Ships and men were in a deplorable condition, and the good priest on whom they relied for the consolations of religion had died on the passage. "On the Feast of the Epiphany I arrived at Veragua, unable to proceed farther. There our Lord enabled me to find a river and a good harbor. I entered it with difficulty, and next day the storm began again. If I had been outside then, I could never have crossed the bar." \* From that time

\* Navarrete, "Cuarto y último viage de Colon."

incessant heavy rain kept Columbus a prisoner till the middle of February, but the more robust Don Bartholomew led off a detachment to explore the country. An Indian village lay near the place of their landing, and the natives assembled to attack the invaders, but were easily pacified. Their cacique, Quibian, dwelt on the banks of the river, and received the adelantado graciously, but adroitly guided him to the gold-mines of another cacique, with whom he was at war. They were more distant and less productive than his own. The country seemed paved with gold. Columbus wrote to the sovereigns that in two days in Veragua he had seen more signs of gold than in four years in Hispaniola. He determined, therefore, to make a settlement at the mouth of the river Belen, and to leave his brother in command with one ship, the *Galician*, while he sailed with the other three to obtain supplies and reinforcements from Hispaniola.

The water had sunk in the river, and it was impossible to extricate the vessels for some time. When Quibian saw that the Spanish intended to remain, he instigated his countrymen to gather in great force, and drive them into the sea. Being a clever politician, he informed the adelantado that he was mustering his forces to make war upon a hostile tribe, and he was believed till the gallant and most faithful Diego Mendez, the chief notary, felt his suspicions aroused, and resolved

at all hazards to himself to settle the doubt. This excellent man was devotedly attached to the admiral, and seems to have been convinced that a special Providence protected those who served him loyally. He acted on several occasions as if he bore a charmed life, and only the goodness of his motives saves him from the reproach of criminal rashness. To sound the intentions of the Indians, he set off in a canoe all alone to watch their movements, and walked coolly into the midst of many thousand warriors assembled under arms. He offered to accompany them in their campaign, but they evidently did not like the suggestion. He retired unscathed. Then he persuaded another rash cavalier to accompany him, and penetrated to the palace of Quibian. A young Indian struck him in the face, but again he escaped with his life. He had proved beyond dispute that a conspiracy was being formed for the extirmination of the Spaniards.

The adelantado was an adept in capturing caciques, and he easily secured the persons of Quibian and all his near relations without bloodshed, but Juan Sanchez, the pilot, to whom he intrusted the prisoner, in his boastful self-reliance, allowed the wily savage to escape. He plunged overboard in his chains, and swam ashore. As important hostages still remained in his power, Columbus thought that it was safe to leave the settlement, and, assisted by fresh floods, he succeeded, though

with great difficulty, in moving his three ships over the sand-banks at the entrance of the harbor. They had to wait for a favorable wind. Meantime Quibian was at work. The abduction of his household, instead of intimidating him, had driven him wild. A furious attack was made on the feeble fortification, and repulsed, but only for a time, by prodigies of valor. A boat was sent off by Columbus to get water, and all the crew were murdered except one, who escaped by diving. Columbus, not daring to risk his sole remaining boat in the wild surf, gladly accepted the offer of a brave man, Pedro de Ledesma, to swim ashore and bring back news. He succeeded in going and returning, and the news he brought determined Columbus to break up the settlement, leaving the *Galician* to its fate, and to take all his men away from that inhospitable shore, though his ships by this time were little better than wrecks, and the choice seemed to lie between certain death on shore and almost certain death at sea.

It was a time of mental agony for the great commander. Irving says:

“ Every hour increased the anxiety of Columbus for his brother, for his people, and for his ships, yet each succeeding hour only appeared to render the impending dangers more imminent. Days of constant perturbation, and nights of sleepless anguish, preyed upon a constitution

broken by age and hardships. Amidst the acute maladies of his body and the fever of his mind, he appears to have been visited by partial delirium. The workings of his diseased imagination, at such times, he was prone to consider as something mysterious and supernatural. In a letter to the sovereigns he gives a solemn account of a kind of vision which comforted him when full of despondency and tossing on a couch of pain." ("Life of Columbus," bk. xv. ch. ix.)

If visions are impossible, this was no vision. Comfort so opportune and so efficacious may easily have been something of a higher order than Irving, in his "impatience of the supernatural," supposes. The change produced could not have been more complete if the voice which Columbus heard was really, as he himself believed, a message from God, and not, as a Protestant historian is bound to suppose, the raving of a disordered mind. Between sleeping and waking, he received a solemn admonition, beginning with the words, "O foolish and slow of heart!" He was then reminded of the mercies God had shown him, and finally encouraged with the words, "Fear not! have confidence! all these tribulations are written on marble, and not without cause."

Thus consoled, Columbus took heart, and felt that God would still be with him. He had not sailed many leagues before another caravel had to be abandoned. All the men were now crowded

upon two vessels. Working day and night at the pumps, they reached a group of islands on the coast of Cuba. Here, in a storm, the two vessels were further disabled by a violent collision, but Columbus obtained some provisions, and resumed his course for Hispaniola. He was forced, however, to run both ships aground in a beautiful bay on the coast of Jamaica. It seemed to him miraculous that, being so full of water, they had not foundered. The only thing now was to make the best of the situation, to entrench themselves in their wooden fortress, and, if possible, to conciliate the natives. Diego Mendez won the affections of the caciques far and near, and established a regular system of supplies at fixed prices. He also purchased an excellent canoe.

How was Ovando to be informed of the situation? Columbus put this question to Diego Mendez, and received the answer he expected. He would try with the help of God to pass those forty leagues in his canoe. "I have only one life, and I am ready to risk it in your service and for the good of all here; because I trust in our Lord that, knowing my good intention, he will deliver me, as he has done many times." It was then arranged that the attempt should be made, though neither Columbus nor Mendez thought lightly of the danger. If the attempt prospered, Mendez was to go from Hispaniola to Spain, bearing a letter to the sovereigns. He at once set to work



to make his frail bark, as far as his skill went, fit for ocean travelling; and, taking an affectionate farewell, set out with six Indians and a Spaniard. He coasted eastward, narrowly escaped being murdered by the Indians just before leaving Jamaica, and returned very shortly without his companions to offer to make a fresh start if an escort was sent along the island to see him safe off to sea. The minds of the Spaniards had by this time become familiar with the project, which had lost in consequence some portion of its terror, so that for his second attempt Diego Mendez was accompanied by Bartholomew Fieschi, a man almost as loyal and devoted as himself, and by six other Spaniards and twenty Indians, who were equally distributed in two large canoes. The adelantado with an armed force escorted them to the eastern extremity of Jamaica, where they waited for settled weather.

The sufferings of the voyage under the burning sun were terrible. The water soon had to be doled out to all in such scanty measure that it was more like mockery to their thirst. By what seemed a mere accident, they sighted in the night-time a little, low-lying island, which they had despaired of finding. Some of the Indians had already died of thirst at sea; others died upon the island from their intemperate draughts of rain-water collected in the crevices of the rocks. Finally, Mendez and Fieschi reached His-

paniola. Fieschi wanted to return to Columbus at once ; but neither for love nor money would Spaniard or Indian go with him, and he could not manage the canoe alone. Mendez made his way, all by himself, through matted forests full of hostile Indians to Xaragua, where Ovando was crushing with relentless cruelty what there is reason to think was only an imaginary rebellion. He told his sad story to Ovando, who seemed much affected, but left Columbus eight long months to himself, and then sent Escobar, one of Roldan's rebels, just to look at the Spanish settlement from his ship without landing, and to cause to be conveyed in a little boat to the admiral, with many courteous expressions of good-will, a barrel of wine and a side of bacon ! The feelings of Columbus may be in part imagined. Again we need not accuse Ovando of actually seeking the destruction of his rival ; but it is beyond all doubt that he preferred that Columbus should remain a little longer where he was, especially as it appeared by the account of Mendez that provisions could be obtained from the Indians of Jamaica.

During those eight months of cruel abandonment, when from the failure of Fieschi to return, as he had promised, it seemed only too evident that the canoes had not reached Hispaniola—for that Ovando should not try to help them could scarcely have been surmised—men not saints, and not resigned like their chief to the will of Heaven,

deprived, moreover, of the consolations of religion were sure to grow desperate. Francisco and Diego Porras had been in a manner forced upon Columbus at the last moment. At their own urgent entreaty, backed by the intercession of their brother-in-law, a man in high office, they had been permitted, as a personal favor, to join the expedition, and had received many marks of kindness from the admiral. Now in his affliction they deserted him. They studiously fomented the increasing discontent, affirming that Columbus, if the truth were known, was not very anxious to leave his present place of exile, that Ovando had already refused to have him in Hispaniola, and that their best chance of being received there was to go without him. They represented that it was quite fair to abandon him, since in reality he had first abandoned them; for Mendez and Fieschi had been sent not to demand help from Ovando, but to see to the interests of Columbus in Spain.

Francisco de Porras burst into the cabin where Columbus was ill in bed, and in a torrent of reproaches gave him the option of embarking at once or remaining to perish. It was in vain that Columbus tried to show him the absurdity of his suspicions, for he did not wish to be undeceived, and only sought a pretext for saying that the admiral would not listen to reason. He rushed out shouting, "To Castile! to Castile! follow who will!" Many misguided men joined him at

once. Columbus sprang out of bed to endeavor to appease the fury of the mutineers, but Don Bartholomew could with difficulty be kept from using his lance by way of argument. Porras, followed by most of the able-bodied men, coasted eastward in ten canoes, intending to follow in the track of Mendez. Wherever they landed they oppressed and outraged the natives, and told them malignant falsehoods about Columbus, to incite them to attack the invalid garrison. From the eastern point of the island, after waiting for calm weather, they pushed off to sea; but the wind rose immediately and they turned back, lightening their load by throwing the Indians overboard. They made a second and third attempt equally unprospered of Heaven, and then, cursing their ill-fortune, turned professional marauders, and passed, Irving says, "like a pestilence through the island."

Soon, to add to the distress of the admiral, the Indians grew careless, and provisions no longer arrived according to stipulation. The story of the prediction of the eclipse, by which he worked upon the fears of the natives, is well known. M. Roselly de Lorgues \* reminds us that, while much of the apparent disingenuousness and irreverence of what seems at first sight a mock appeal to Heaven would in any case depend upon the

\* "*Christophe Colomb*," bk. ii. p. 298, seq.

actual words employed by Columbus, no one for a moment pretends that we are in possession of his actual words; and that there would be no disingenuousness or irreverence at all, if (which we can no more deny than affirm) God himself had inspired either the first idea or the opportune remembrance of the precise time of the eclipse. Those who feel sure that Columbus a short time before mistook a flight of delirious fancy for a vision sent by God might save him from the charge of impiety by consistently supposing that on this occasion he mistook a "happy thought" for a divine inspiration. Perhaps the poor natives were under no great delusion after all when they drew the inference that the prayers of the persecuted just man were powerful with his God.

Some of those who had remained with Columbus had only been deterred by weak health from going with Porras, and their loyalty vanished when their strength returned. Just when a new secession had been planned, Escobar's ship was seen approaching. The joy of all was extreme, but was soon changed into bitter complaint. Escobar departed as he came, without taking one exile with him, alleging that Ovando had no ship large enough for them all, but offering to be the bearer of any dispatches which the admiral could make up at a moment's notice. The men in the boat had orders to answer no questions, and the whole transaction was enveloped in mystery.

Porras even contrived to make some of his men believe that Columbus had conjured up a phantom ship. It must have been a sore trial, but he kept up the appearance of hope. He made the most of the reason alleged. It was better not to divide their forces. They would not have much longer to wait, and then all could depart together. Porras, feeling sure that he had sinned beyond forgiveness, was resolved that those with him should share his desperation, and moved nearer to the admiral to arrange an attack. He received overtures of peace, with the offer of an amnesty to all on condition of immediate surrender. He would not permit the envoys to deliver their message to his men, but went out to meet them and made such haughty demands that no reconciliation could be attempted. Then the adelantado started with fifty men to offer an ultimatum. This little troop was made up of recent invalids, high-spirited, but still feeble; and the rebels were both more numerous and more robust. Negotiation was soon abandoned. Porras with his men made a fierce onslaught, but they were beaten back by the noble adelantado, who with his own hands secured their chief. It is sad to find Pedro de Ledesma in such company. He was left for dead on the field, covered with wounds, but they were not mortal. He met his death years afterwards by assassination in Seville. When Porras was taken prisoner, the rest ran

away. They soon sent a petition for mercy to the admiral, and were received with open arms; but to prevent any disastrous collision, naturally to be feared among men who had so lately been bitter foes, they were sent off under a trusty leader to explore the island till the ships should arrive.

When Ovando saw that longer delay would bring punishment upon himself, he at last permitted two ships to be sent. It took Columbus a full month to sail across the channel which Diego Mendez had crossed with his canoes in four days. Finally, on the 13th of August, 1504, six weeks after leaving that strange abode—two battered ships forced ashore in a storm and deeply bedded in the sand—in which he had been kept a prisoner for so many months, Columbus arrived at St. Domingo.

It is only due to the memory of Columbus that a few words should be said about the administration of Ovando. Under him the *repartimientos* begun by Bobadilla attained maturity by royal sanction. He had represented that idleness was ruinous to the Indians, and was the chief obstacle to their embracing the faith. A letter from the sovereigns empowered him to exact forced labor, but ordered him to see that the natives were properly treated and duly remunerated. This letter formed the basis of a system of organized oppression which defies description. "Twelve years



had not elapsed since the discovery of the island, and several hundred thousand of its inhabitants had perished, miserable victims to the grasping avarice of the white men." \*

The fate of Anacaona, the generous friend of the white men, shows the detestable cruelty of the Spaniards when Columbus no longer crossed their path.

"As the Indians had entertained their guests with various national games, Ovando invited them in return to witness certain games of his country. . . . The cavalry and foot soldiers had their secret instructions. . . . At the appointed time the square was crowded with the Indians, waiting to see this military spectacle. . . . The caciques were assembled in the house of Ovando, which looked upon the square. None were armed; an unreserved confidence prevailed among them, totally incompatible with the dark treachery of which they were accused. . . . Ovando left his game (of quoits) . . . and gave the fatal signal. . . . The house in which Anacaona and all the principal caciques were assembled was surrounded by soldiery . . . and no one was permitted to escape. They entered, and seizing upon the caciques, bound them to the posts which supported the roof. Anacaona was led forth a prisoner. The unhappy caciques were then put to horrible tortures, until some of them, in the extremity of

\* Irving's "Life of Columbus," bk. xvii. c. i.

anguish, were made to accuse their queen and themselves of the plot with which they were charged. When this cruel mockery of judicial form had been executed, instead of preserving them for after examination, fire was set to the house, and all the caciques perished miserably in the flames. While these barbarities were practised upon the chieftains, a horrible massacre took place among the populace. . . . No mercy was shown to age or sex; it was a savage and indiscriminate butchery. . . . As to the Princess Anacaona, she was carried in chains to San Domingo. The mockery of a trial was given her, in which she was found guilty on the confessions which had been wrung by tortures from her subjects and on the testimony of their butchers, and she was ignominiously hanged in the presence of the people whom she had so long and so signally befriended" (Irving's "*Life of Columbus*," bk. xvii. c. ii.)

Isabella on her death-bed received the news of these atrocities, and extorted an insincere promise from Ferdinand to recall Ovando at once.

Ovando pretended great joy at seeing Columbus, but this was a necessary condescension to popular opinion. His real sentiments may be gathered from his conduct. He began by setting Porras at liberty, and threatening to punish the faithful defenders of the admiral for having slain some of the rebels.

On the 7th of November, 1504, Columbus reached Spain in a very feeble state of health. He sought repose in Seville, and tried by writing letters to procure payment of the arrears of revenue; but Isabella was on her death-bed, and it soon became apparent that without personal application at court he had not the slightest chance of recovering his rights. Three weeks after his arrival Isabella died.

“A memorial for thee, my dear son Diego, of what is at present to be done. The principal thing is to commend affectionately, and with great devotion, the soul of the queen, our sovereign, to God. Her life was always Catholic and holy, and prompt to all things in his holy service; for this reason we may rest assured that she is received into his glory, and beyond the cares of this rough and weary world. The next thing is to watch and labor in all matters for the service of our sovereign the king, and to endeavor to alleviate his grief. His majesty is the head of Christendom. Remember the proverb which says when the head suffers all the members suffer. Therefore all good Christians should pray for his health and long life; and we, who are in his employ, ought more than others to do this with all study and diligence” (Irving’s “Life of Columbus,” bk. xviii. c. ii.)

Ferdinand was unworthy of the loyal service of Columbus, utterly unworthy of the faithful

love of the saintly Isabella. In Isabella's grave lay buried the earthly hopes of her great admiral. From her death to his own, eighteen months later, he was working hard for his son's sake, to obtain from the ungrateful king his money overdue and his privileges confirmed upon oath again and again. Ferdinand saw that his troublesome suit would soon be stilled in death, and so he put him off with fair words and waited for the end.

"A little more delay, a little more disappointment, and a little more infliction of ingratitude, and this loyal and generous heart would cease to beat; he should then be delivered from the just claims of a well-trying servant, who, in ceasing to be useful, was considered by him to have become importunate" (Irving's 'Life of Columbus,' bk. xviii. c. iii.)

Columbus died at Valladolid on the feast of the Ascension, 20th of May, 1506. Don Bartholomew was not by his side. He had gone to represent his sick brother on occasion of the landing of the youthful sovereigns of Castile, Philip and Joanna, and he never saw Christopher again on earth.

The will of Columbus,\* from which an extract

\* Irving speaks of the will of Columbus as if it had been drawn up in the last illness, but it was only the legal ratification which immediately preceded his death. The will itself dated from 1502. This is a point of some importance in the controversy about Beatrix Enriquez. The remorse of conscience which he felt on her account was not "compunction awakened in his dying moments," nor need we seek for any other motive than the estrangement from his wife to which his roving life had con-

has already been given, is in its main provisions identical with the deed of *majoratus* executed in 1498, breathing throughout the same zeal for the glory of God, the same greatness of purpose, the same eagerness to satisfy all just claims, the same Christian generosity, and the same central idea, unretracted in death—the conquest of Jerusalem.

In the room of an inn in Valladolid Columbus prepared for death. The chains, his earthly reward, were hanging on the wall. Not one of the *grandees* of Spain came to see him, or cared to enquire about him. His two sons were with him, and a few of his old officers, Bartholomew Fieschi among them. The Franciscan Fathers attended him. He wore his Franciscan habit as a tertiary. Isabella had done the same on her deathbed. He was in possession of all his faculties to the last. He did not bequeath his chains to his heir with demand of vengeance, but he wished to have them buried with him. Bobadilla carried to his grave great heaps of gold, the wages of his sin. Columbus took with him the symbol of an earthly king's ingratitude. Those chains were very dear to him, for he knew how faithfully he had served King Ferdinand, and there is no surer passport to the kingdom of heaven than penance joined to

demned him. Any graver guilt of husband or of wife would not have passed unnoted when so many slanderous tongues were busy.

innocence, virtue chastised, persecution for justice' sake. He confessed his sins, received viaticum, and was anointed at his own request. His last words, according to Don Fernando, were: "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit." We cannot doubt that our Lord hastened to receive into his rest that faithful servant, who through good report and ill report had labored for his greater glory, to bring the ends of the earth within the hearing of his name, and to enable Christians to rekindle the fervor of faith on the very spot where the precious blood was shed; that faithful servant who, like his master had many bitter enemies enviously seeking his destruction, and forgave them all; who, probably enough, died like his master, of a broken heart, broken by the same thought of agony—the ruin of souls which he so longed to save.

That Columbus was a man of blameless life, a fervent Christian, careful to keep his soul in the state of grace, and habitually acting upon very high motives of the service of God and the increase of the Church—in other words, that he was a saint in a less strict sense of the word, seems to be fairly certified by the careful researches of Count Roselly de Lorgues. Whether he was a saint in that highest sense which is meant when we speak of formal canonization must ultimately depend upon the intervention of Heaven. Pending the proof of miracles wrought

after his death and by his direct intercession,\* and pending also any declaration of the Church in his cause, we can only say that the great work given him to do, his own deep sense of a divine vocation, his life worthy of that high commission, his humble readiness to ascribe all his achievements to the helping hand of God, his edifying forgiveness of the most malignant outrages, his childlike trust in the protection of Heaven, repaid, as we have seen, by the standing miracle of a special Providence visibly exerted in his behalf, and carrying him safely through a thousand dangers in long tempestuous voyages, with ships scarcely seaworthy at their best, but still, with gaping seams, and teredo-pierced planks, ever keeping above water till land was reached and then falling to pieces on shore; his wonderful predictions, the visions in which he himself put faith; above all, his surpassing tribulations patiently endured, and his death in deep obscurity and contempt, without one vindictive word, certainly favor the idea that Christopher Columbus is a saint in the strictest sense of the word.

His body was taken by the Franciscans to their convent vault in Valladolid. They alone took any thought about him. A history of the city, the "*Chronicle of Valladolid*," which makes men-

\* Of miracles indirectly attributable to him, worked by means of a cross which he erected in Hispaniola, there is abundant evidence.



tion of minute events of local interest, takes no notice of his death. Peter Martyr, the renowned historian, who had once been proud to call himself his friend, does not consider his death a matter for history. Years afterwards he was spoken of in a book as being still alive. Ferdinand, writing to Diego a fortnight after his father's death, had not a word of decent condolence to offer, though seven years later he caused the body to be removed to Seville and there interred with high honor. The epitaph upon his tomb was brief but full of meaning :

“POR CASTILLA Y POR LEON  
NUEVO MUNDO HALLO COLON.”

In 1536 the body was translated to San Domingo, and in 1796 to Havana, where it now rests, and by its side are the mortal remains of the brave adelantado.

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In conclusion, we may add one or two remarks by way of correction. In the first place, it is stated in the third chapter, on the authority of Robertson, that Las Casas recommended as the lesser of two evils the importation of negroes into the West Indies. This assertion, accepted by Irving and by many other writers both before and since Robertson, rests upon the sole testimony of Herrera, who, though generally trustworthy, was certainly prejudiced against Las

Casas. It receives no corroboration from the writings of Las Casas himself, or his contemporaries. Consult, "Apologie de Barthélemy de Las Casas évêque de Chiapa par le citoyen Grégoire (Count Louis Grégoire, Bishop of Blois), lu à l'Institut National le 2 Floréal an 8 (1800).

In the second place, two documents which have just come to light in Spain, the one discovered by Father Raymond Buldù at Valencia, the other by Father Marcellino da Civezza in the library of the Royal Academy of History in Madrid, seems to supply all that can be required of direct testimony to the marriage of Beatrix Enriquez. See *L'Univers*, 11th of January, 1877.

THE END.









